

Anonymous seeks to save leukaemia

LONDON (AFP) — A group of scientists has announced that they have discovered a way to save leukaemia patients from the need for a bone marrow transplant.

Germany: 33 paint to Russia

ed

Vandals stole 4 Dutch masks in Hermitage

4 women, war veteran killed in Algeria
TUNIS (R) — Suspected Muslim militants in Algeria have murdered four young women, including one who was pregnant and a teenager butchered outside her school, Algerian media reported on Monday. The official news agency APS, quoting a security statement, said six gunmen dragged 15-year-old Ghodbane Fatima from her school on Monday and slit her throat. "Six terrorists ... cut her throat 10 metres away from the school and brought her lifeless body back and dumped it at the entrance," the statement said. It said the attack took place in Oued Djer in the northern province of Blida about 50 kilometres south of Algiers. On Saturday Karima Guedjail, 18, and her 19-year-old sister Amel were shot dead in front of their father and young sister by three armed men who burst into their home at Reghaia city, east of Algiers, the Algerian daily Liberte said. One of the two girls was engaged to a policeman, the newspaper said. APS confirmed the killings. Also on Saturday eight gunmen killed 26-year-old Yamina Amrani, who was pregnant, in her home in the village of Tessala Al Mardja. They stole jewellery and escaped, APS said.



Jordan Times

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King, Christopher agree on need to fulfil U.S. pledges to Jordan

His Majesty says honouring commitments is important to advancing other tracks and protecting peace itself
Specific answers to Jordan's requests of modernising army, strengthening regional role to be sought in talks with Clinton

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher Monday renewed the U.S. pledge to support the Kingdom and His Majesty King Hussein said he "was assured" by what he heard from Mr. Christopher about the U.S. commitment to meet the security needs of the country.

King Hussein told a press conference after holding talks with Mr. Christopher on the Middle East peace process and bilateral ties that "it is very, very important" for the U.S. to honour its commitment to the Kingdom as the region enters a new era that will require the removal of

the burdens that people have had to live with through years of conflict. "That the United States fulfills its promise is very important because... of the partnership that we have in terms of trying to secure a comprehensive, just, lasting peace in the region," the King said at a joint press conference with Mr. Christopher.

The King said he did not believe that President Bill Clinton or Mr. Christopher were any less committed in their endeavours to honour their commitments to the Kingdom, adding that even in the U.S. Congress and Senate there is "a good atmosphere now in terms of understanding of what the problem

really is." "We are convinced that there will not be a problem... that the commitment will be honoured fully... as we are trying elsewhere to remove some of the burdens as we approach a new phase, a new era," said the King, stressing the importance of succeeding in convincing people that peace brings with it change and opportunities.



His Majesty King Hussein gestures as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher looks on at a joint press conference they held in Amman on Monday (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

there was a period during which some new congressional sub-committees or committee leaders did not have full appreciation for the contribution that Jordan has made to the peace process or to the commitment the U.S. has made to it because of the risk the Kingdom had taken for peace.

But Mr. Christopher said: "I want to emphasise to Your Majesty that there is now deeper understanding of the role Jordan has played (and) a sense of gratitude for the risks you have taken for

peace." "This is the kind of dividend that has come out of this period in which there was some uncertainty but now it looks to be a very positive turn around," said Mr. Christopher.

Security Council keeps Iraq sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council decided Monday to keep international economic sanctions on Iraq that were imposed in 1990 when Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait. The sanctions were automatically renewed because Baghdad had not yet fully complied with U.N. resolutions, said the current council president, Li Zhaoxing of China. The decision was a victory for the United States, which had campaigned in recent weeks for the sanctions against Iraq to be maintained despite pressure from Russia and France for them to be lifted, at least in part. Diplomats who attended the closed meeting said that none of the representatives of the council's 15 member states pressed for an immediate easing of the sanctions on Baghdad.

Jordan-Israel panel meets

AMMAN (Petra) — A joint Jordanian-Israeli committee entrusted with following up the implementation of the Oct. 26 peace treaty met on Monday in the Jordanian town of Deir Alla. The committee, meeting under the co-chairmanship of Hani Mulki on the Jordanian side and Eliakim Rubinstein on the Israeli side, reviewed the outcome of meetings by specialised committees, particularly those discussing trade and transport. An Aqaba-Eilat sub-committee decided on Monday to meet early next month in Aqaba to discuss the committee's agenda.

PLO to meet in Tunis tomorrow

TUNIS (AFP) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is to convene in the Tunisian capital from Wednesday to review the peace process with Israel and disputes with other factions, Palestinian officials said Monday. The central committee of PLO leader's Yasser Arafat mainstream Fatah movement is to meet on Wednesday and Thursday, to be followed the next two days by the PLO Executive Committee. Mr. Arafat is to chair both sessions.

Mubarak arrives in Japan

TOKYO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak arrived here Monday for a four-day visit to discuss with Japanese leaders bilateral economic ties and Egypt's role in the Middle East peace process.

Major arrives here today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — British Prime Minister John Major arrives here today in his first visit to Jordan as prime minister and described by British officials as a reaffirmation on the strong ties that bind the two countries.

On the political side, Mr. Major's talks with His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker would include the Middle East peace process, the situation of Iraq following the Gulf crisis, and the conflict in former Yugoslavia.

The British prime minister, who arrived in Israel on Monday on the first leg of a Middle East visit, is also expected to brief the Jordanian leaders on the outcome of his talks with Israeli leaders as well as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said after talks with Mr. Major on Monday that he told the British leader that London should give

Court overturns guilty verdict in Muta case

Decision hailed as reaffirmation of independence of Jordan's judiciary

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In what was described as a precedent in the history of Jordan's judiciary, the Court of Cassation on Monday repealed a State Security Court verdict convicting eight Jordanians of charges ranging from plotting to assassinate His Majesty the King to belonging to an illegal group.

The court cleared the defendants, three of them sentenced to death, from all the charges against them and ordered their immediate release.

Saleh Armouti, one of the defendants' lawyers, said the court repealed the conviction because it was not "comfortable" with the confession of the defendants and had ruled that testimonies provided by major witnesses were irrelevant to the charges of which the defendants were accused.

Israel not to discuss Jerusalem, borders, colonies before elections

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel will not tackle the fate of Jerusalem, the final border with the Palestinians or the future of Jewish settlements before the 1996 general elections, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Monday.

Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiations on these thorny issues are scheduled to start by May 1996, and Mr. Peres' remarks indicated that Israel will be marking time at the negotiating table for at least half a year until the fall elections.

Mr. Peres' statements gave a first glimpse how the ruling Labour Party plans to sell the idea of making peace with the Palestinians to an increasingly skittish Israeli public.

"Three things we won't do," Mr. Peres told Labour legislators. "We don't deal with Jerusalem before the elections, and we won't deal with setting a permanent border and with settlements."

Egypt ready to build major nuclear reactor

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt is ready to begin a nuclear energy programme whenever politicians decide to take the step, the director of Egypt's Nuclear Reactor Agency (NRA), Hafez Higgi, said Monday.

"We are in a state of readiness, waiting only for the political decision," he said.

Pension hike to cost JD 7 million

AMMAN (Petra) — The overall cost of the pension increase granted to retired civil servants and ex-servicemen is estimated at JD 7 million this year, a parliament member said Monday, quoting Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh.

The NRA has produced proposals for building a reactor to produce electricity and the government is studying them, Mr. Higgi added.

Egypt began building a laboratory reactor with a 22 megawatt capacity this year, Mr. Higgi said.

The project, costing 400 million Egyptian pounds (\$118 million), is being implemented in cooperation with Argentina and will be completed in five years, he added.

A smaller laboratory reactor with a seven megawatt capacity has been in use since the former Soviet Union helped Egypt build it 1961.

One of the proposed sites for a working reactor is the Al Dabaa region, 150 kilometres west of the north-east port of Alexandria, Mr. Higgi said.

While it is too early to estimate the capacity or cost of a working reactor, "the current trend is to build

suffered because of a number of scandals, including reports of widespread corruption in the Histadrut trade union federation involving senior Labour Party figures.

Mr. Peres said Monday the government would use its remaining time to implement the autonomy agreement with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, including a troop withdrawal from West Bank towns and Palestinian elections.

"We have 20 months left until the (Israeli) elections. These 20 months will be devoted to peacemaking, not politicking," Mr. Peres said, referring to scandals involving his party.

He said his government would press ahead regardless of the opinion polls. "We've decided to make decisions. We are not going to wait for applause or a poll," said Mr. Peres, one of the architects of the September 1993 Israel-PLO autonomy accord.

Meanwhile, hundreds of plainclothes Palestinian police have been deployed in the West Bank town of Jenin in preparation for its hand-over to the self-rule authority, the daily Haaretz reported Monday quoting an army document.

The deployment was part of a secret plan which will transfer Jenin, Ramallah and Nablus to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) as

self-rule is extended on the West Bank, the paper said. An Israeli military spokesman said the Haaretz report was being investigated.

Continued on page 7

Industry chief stresses U.S. aid to Jordan vital for peace process

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Middle East peace process could be jeopardised if the American administration does not extend financial support to Jordan through debt relief and economic aid, one of the Kingdom's business leaders said Monday.

Khalid Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, also cautioned against labelling all Muslims as terrorists and called for Jewish lobbying to make Israel more forthcoming in making peace with the Arabs.

Mr. Abu Hassan, addressing a delegation from the American Bar Association (ABA) which is here on a familiarisation mission, also emphasised to the lawyers' team the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, whose country is suffering from international sanctions.

Mr. Abu Hassan told the delegation in a meeting held at the Amman Chamber of Industry that Jordanians were frustrated by a recent move by a congressional subcommittee to slash to \$50 million an administration request for a \$275 million outlay for debt write-off for Jordan.

"This debt is infinitesimal in comparison with the mas-

sive aid for Israel, which includes grants, interest and loan guarantees which amount to no less than \$6.32 billion, creating a wide disparity between Israel and its neighbours," said Mr. Abu Hassan.

Noting the commitment of Jordan to peace and that the Kingdom had already signed a peace treaty with Israel, Mr. Abu Hassan said: "It is our impression that the U.S. administration has not been appreciative enough of this role and has neither been supportive nor rewarding of the steps and the courageous role of His Majesty's enlightened and beneficent leadership."

"Thus, we believe that the peace process will be jeopardised if the American policy does not lend it enough effective and sufficient support."

On Islam, Mr. Abu Hassan said: "There is a growing feeling against the orchestrated mass media campaign against Islam, where the followers of the Islamic faith are branded, en masse, as terrorists."

"It is a campaign which does not only marginalise the peace process but also frustrates faith in it and its objectives."

Mr. Abu Hassan told the delegation, which includes

Arab Americans as well as Jewish Americans, that the support of the American Jewish community was vital for the success of the peace process.

"They would do well to advise Israel to be more forward in implementing the peace accords, to be less in compassionate in dealing with the Palestinians, less boastful of military prowess and more respectful of human rights," he said, expressing hope that American Jewish organisations "will uphold their support for the much coveted and just and permanent peace."

Underlining that the people of Iraq are exposed to untold suffering as a result of the international sanctions imposed on their country in August 1990, Mr. Abu Hassan said:

"It's high time to see the embargo on Iraq totally lifted to allow the Iraqis to resume their normal way of life, concentrate on rebuilding their houses, business, schools and universities, and so, allay the sufferings of the general public of Iraq, where hunger is life and diseases are wide spread."

Mr. Abu Hassan described the Amman Chamber of Industry as a democratically constituted institution representing more than 90 per cent

of Jordan's manufacturing units with overwhelming private sector participation.

He also noted that many Jordanian industries operate under international licensing arrangements.

Following Mr. Abu Hassan's presentation, the delegation members and representatives of Jordanian industries exchanged views on the Kingdom's industry and investment climate.

The American Bar Association delegation is here on a visit aimed at gaining first-hand information on the investment climate in Jordan.

Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb and ministry as well as Amman Financial Market (AFM) officials briefed the delegation on Sunday.

On Monday, Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) officials met the delegation and presented a briefing on the Kingdom's banking system and facilities for early transfer of funds to and from Jordan.

Emad Timawi, programme chairman of the delegation, told the Jordan Times on Monday that the delegation members were impressed by what they heard and learnt while in Jordan. They would advise their clients back in the U.S. to "look seriously" at investment opportunities in Jordan, he said.

Bomb may have been aimed at Arafat

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — One of seven roadside bombs discovered by a joint Israeli-Palestinian patrol in the Gaza Strip may have been planted to kill Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, Israeli's police minister said Monday.

The explosive near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom was dismantled Sunday just before Mr. Arafat was to drive through the area on his way from Cairo to this Gaza City office.

"The bombs yesterday, I'm not sure against whom they were aimed," said Police Minister Moshe Shabai. "(But) five minutes later Yasser Arafat's entourage passed."



Palestinian and Israeli officers argue next to taken by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in the site where two remote-controlled bombs the Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Mr. Shabai said Mr. Arafat needed to realise that the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad were targeting him as well as Israelis, and that the PLO leader must crack down on his armed opponents.

The bomb near Kfar Darom, consisting of 50 kilos of TNT, was hidden

in a plastic barrel used as a road divider and could have caused extensive damage, Israeli army radio said.

Palestinian police officials said they were investigating the incident. "We cannot say at whom the bomb was aimed. President Arafat takes this road all the time, but so

do the Israelis," said a police major.

Leaders of the about 5,000 Jewish settlers in the Gaza Strip met with the Israeli armed forces chief of staff, Lieutenant-General Amnon Shahak on Monday. The settlers complained that Israeli troops did not do enough to protect them.

Somali militias sign new agreement

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somalia's main clan militia leaders have agreed to set up a joint committee to control the capital Mogadishu's sea port and airport, Somalis said.

The agreement, between Mohammed Farah Aided and his main rival Ali Mahdi Mohammed, stipulates that their militias will patrol the facilities in joint markings, keep other gunmen out and guarantee the safety of local and foreign users.

The 11-point agreement, made available to Reuters, appears to cement a more informal understanding reached last month.

Aid and relief groups, who left the anarchic Horn of Africa country when United Nations peacekeeping forces pulled out earlier this month, have set the peaceful running of the port and airport as a prior condition to returning.

The warlords' first accord has reduced fears of all-out clan warfare in Mogadishu after the U.N. troops pulled out.

But after four years of famine, anarchy and conflict with U.S.-led foreign peacekeepers, Somalia is still awash with guns and lacks any national institutions or government.

And lower-level feuding has continued. At least four people were killed in a clash inside the airport perimeter on Friday.

General Aided's Habre Gedir militias immediately took the port and airport over when foreign troops evacuated them.

Under the original agreement Mr. Ali Mahdi's Abgal, plus militias from several other clans, are supposed to join them there. This will be the real test of any agreement — and it has not happened yet.

The committee specified in the latest agreement will be responsible for safeguarding local and expatriate customers in the facilities, particularly aid groups, and for handling "commercial relations with the outside world."

been repeatedly harassed, kidnapped and robbed by militiamen in Somalia, have vowed not to return if it happens again.

The agreement says gunmen are to be kept away, "except for (those) carrying the markings of the joint security militia."

Unarmed — and now unpaid — Somali police, from a force trained by the U.N., will patrol inside the ports.

But militias will "secure the cargo transport routes." They also have no pay and have lived by extortion and plunder for the last four years. The youthful militias have been posted to guard the airport and port from looters, but in the past they have also taken the lion's share of plunder.

The agreement even requires foreigners to respect the "immigration department" when using the ports. Before troops arrived in 1992, one gun-toting family looted immigration rubber stamps at the airport and forced visitors to pay "visa

fees." But at the same spot nowadays you can buy a Somali passport as a kind of tourist souvenir for \$10 cash, \$15 for a special diplomatic one.

Secret documents

Several boxes of secret U.S. intelligence documents were found in a vacant U.N. office in Somalia a few days before the pullout of U.N. peacekeepers this month, the Washington Post reported.

Citing anonymous sources, the paper reported in Sunday editions that President Bill Clinton has ordered the joint chiefs of staff to investigate what some administration officials view as a troublesome breach of security.

The report said the incident has attracted the attention of Republican members of Congress sceptical of U.S. cooperation with the United Nations.

No evidence has been found that the U.S. documents fell into the hands of Somalia warlords, the paper reported.

Law to let Algerians arm against extremists

ALGIERS (AP) — A law is being readied allowing Algerians to arm themselves against Islamic extremists, Interior Minister Abdel Hamane Meziane Cherif has been quoted as saying by a newspaper.

The news came as the United States joined several other countries in limiting its services here, further isolating the violence-torn country. A series of seven bombs exploded around the capital since Friday, killing one person and injuring 66.

Algerians seeking non-

immigrant visas to the United States must now make their demands at embassies in "neighbouring countries," according to a U.S. embassy announcement appearing in Algerian newspapers Sunday. The new procedures took effect Saturday.

Meanwhile, the British newspaper the Independent carried an interview with the interior minister who said a law was being prepared that would allow Algerians to arm themselves in self-defence against extremist groups trying to topple the army-

backed government.

The paper quoted him as saying that the law "would enable groups of citizens in isolated areas to protect themselves."

"Many people are asking for weapons," he said without elaborating on the law or when it might take effect.

The minister said the 250 inhabitants of a village in the Jijel region, 250 kilometres east of Algiers, went to the gendarmerie "en masse" demanding weapons.

"We will accept their request, but we are going to

control it carefully," Mr. Meziane Cherif was quoted as saying.

The plan appeared a concession to what have been vain efforts by security forces to put down an Islamic insurgency that has left an estimated 30,000 people dead in three years.

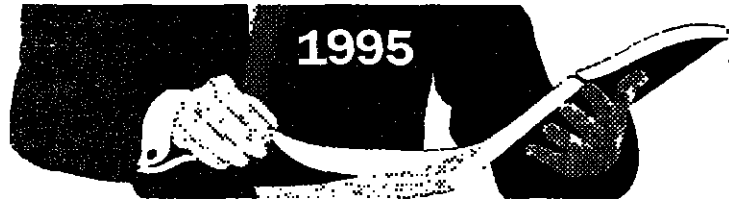
On Saturday, a political party, the Ettahaddi movement, called on citizens to band together to combat the extremists who appear to have developed increasingly sophisticated techniques over time.

Announcing ... New Completely Revised Edition

New revised 1995 edition J.D 20

The orbit International Marketing Est. has the pleasure to announce the launching of the 9th Edition of the TRADE DIRECTORY OF JORDAN 1995.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:40 Le Prince Et La Sirène
17:50 Pyramide
18:00 Le Feu de la Terre
19:00 News in French
19:45 Varieties
19:50 The Bold and the Beautiful
20:30 Home Improvement
21:10 The Nature of Things
22:00 News in English
22:30 Watergate

PRAYER TIMES

04:27 Fajr
05:44 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:45 Asr
15:46 Maghreb
19:03 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swetish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757
Terrence Church, Tel. 62366
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 623541
Anglican Church, Tel. 630851, Tel. 626543
Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 713331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 713261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717151
Armenian International Church Tel. 632526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684193
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675651
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, moderate weather conditions will prevail with winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 8/21
Amman 13/27
Desert 7/23
Jordan Valley 12/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 16, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 32 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Fayez Al Dabbas 799155
Dr. Jamil Tariq 794710
Dr. Yousef Rashid 896301
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
First pharmacy 661912
Furrows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 670555
Nairoboh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shawcrist pharmacy 637680
Nairoboh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IBED:
Dr. Mohammad Al Hiti 797773
Aqaba pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ziyad J'alim (—)
Khalilich pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 821111, 637777
Fire Brigade 671101
Blood Bank 731121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Register 623101
Abdali Telephone Repair 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsani 664171/4
Shamsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musahid Hospital 66727/79
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Jalalin, Al-Muhajir 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Adrafiel 725111/26
Army, Marik 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 686100
Amal Hospital 674153
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital (09)900560
Al-Hussein Modern Hospital (09)986732
IBED:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)272755
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272755
Im Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200, 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:25 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
09:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:30 London (RJ)
16:45 Frankfurt (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:00 Amman (RJ)
08:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:30 Vienna, Madrid (RJ)
11:45 Geneva, London (RJ)
11:45 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:20 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Jeddah (RJ)
20:30 Larnaca (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Arabs to set up court to resolve disputes

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab countries have decided to set up a joint court of seven judges for the first time in their history to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts such as that sparked by Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The plan to set up an Arab Court of Justice along the lines of the International Court in the Hague is to be adopted at a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers here on March 22. The idea was first mooted after the 1991 Gulf war which ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait. The crisis created huge rifts in the Arab World. According to the draft text, the court will be "responsible for settling disputes between member states of the Arab League which will address it." Non-members linked to Arab League through bilateral or multilateral accords will be given the same rights to have recourse to the court. The judges will be elected from candidates versed in Islamic Sharia and international law by a two-thirds majority of Arab League foreign ministers. They will serve for a non-renewable term of six years. Each country can put forward two candidates, of whom only one may be elected as a judge.

Gaza journalists accuse PNA of censorship

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Gaza journalists on Sunday accused Yasser Arafat's Palestine National Authority (PNA) of censoring a newspaper article criticising Palestinian police chiefs. The Association of Arab Journalists said the PNA on Friday seized a delivery of the Palestinian monthly Sahel Al Falestini, before releasing copies two days later with the offending article replaced by another. The article by Zaki Kilani, head of Gaza's human rights association, accused police chiefs of failing to protect three Palestinian policemen shot dead by the Israeli army on Jan. 2 on the border between Israel and Gaza. "We have many intelligence agencies but what purpose do they serve?" Mr. Kilani wrote. The monthly is financed by the PNA and generally reflects the views of Mr. Arafat's Fatah faction. Mr. Kilani was questioned Friday by the Palestinian

intelligence service before being released, the journalists' association said in a statement. "We condemn the behaviour of certain Palestinian Authority officials... It is a violation of press freedom," the statement said. "We call on President Arafat to do his best to prevent a repeat of this type of very dangerous incident," it added.

Bombing attacks kill two in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Assaults detonated bombs and opened fire Sunday at three cafes in an Istanbul suburb, killing at least two people and wounding 10, police said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the simultaneous attacks, the police said. After the bombs went off, gunmen opened fire with automatic weapons at three cafes in the same area. The assaults fled. Police said they did not know the motive of the attacks.

'Golden' goat is a nice little earner

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Palestinian peasant has hit on the equivalent of the proverbial golden goose: a goat whose milk is fetching \$50 a glass, the Al Quds newspaper reported Monday. The strange tale concerns a billy goat named Abu Musaed who gives milk from a single teat. Word soon spread from the West Bank village of Sinirra, near Tulkarem, that the milk had magical powers and could cure infertility in men, the Arabic-language daily said. Mufid Abdul Ghafer, the goat's owner, has orders for the next three weeks. He takes extra care of the money-spinning animal and has given it its own quarters away from the rest of the herd. Abu Musaed also enjoys a healthy diet of fruit and vegetables and drinks from a plastic bottle, not the rusing metal through for the other goats. "One man from Hebron offered me 10,000 dinars," Abdul Ghafer told the newspaper. But he said he will not accept less than 20,000 dinars. Mr. Abdul Ghafer has only one regret: Abu Musaed gives only three glasses of milk a day.

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Cabbage (Mukammal) 620
Carrot 110/50
Cauliflower 180/100
Cucumbers (large) 100/50
Cucumbers (small) 200/100
Eggplant 140/80
Garlic 240/180
Green beans 120/80
Lemon 350/120
Marrow (large) 90/50
Marrow (small) 150/80
Onion (green) 240/140
Onion (dry) 400/250
Orange 450/350
Peas 620/400
Pepper (hot) 380/480
Pepper (sweet) 340/240
Potato 280/180
Spinach 120/60
String Beans 600/400
Tomato 200/100

Home News

Prince Abdullah inaugurates 11 new sports fields

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Al Hussein Monday inaugurated 11 sports fields established by the Greater Amman Municipality in various parts of the capital.

Prince Abdullah, accompanied by Youth Minister Awad Kheifaf and Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi, visited one of the sports fields in Prince Hassan district.

The minister and the mayor later inspected the rest of the fields, which the Ministry of Youth received as a gift from the municipality, and visited the site of the sports city which will be established in eastern Amman.

Dr. Kheifaf voiced appreciation of efforts exerted by the municipality to support the sports movement in Jordan and urged other municipalities around the Kingdom to follow the Amman municipality's suit.

On his part, Dr. Abbadi voiced his municipality's readiness to support the sports movement in the Kingdom, noting that the municipality has recently set up a committee comprising representatives of the youth ministry and the sports media federation to help it in that regard.

The sports fields inaugurated Monday were in Prince Hassan, Marka, Tareq, Khilida, Jabal Hussein, Zahran, Wadi Sir, Jubelha, Bader and Um Teena districts.

Jordan receives invitation to Arab parliamentary meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour Monday received an invitation from Moroccan House of Representatives Speaker Mohammed Al Saeed to take part in the sixth conference of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) which will be held in Morocco April 3-5.

The invitation was delivered to Mr. Srour by Moroccan Parliament Deputy Speaker Mohammed Hafithi at a meeting held in Amman Monday.

Mr. Srour and Mr. Hafithi discussed the situation in the Arab World, means of enhancing Arab solidarity and a host of issues related to Arab and international parliamentary work.

Group to teach women how to obtain business loans

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — More than 30 women Tuesday will start a two-week workshop entitled "How to Start Your Own Business" that will qualify them to receive a loan after the completion of the course and will enable the participants to establish or improve their own small businesses, according to the workshop organisers.

"The workshop is designed to help and encourage women desiring to start or expand their own enterprises to learn and apply the ways to receive a loan," said Buthaina Jandaneh, director general of the Business and Professional Women's club (BPWC).

She said that the BPWC noticed that most women wanting to establish a new business lacked knowledge of the financial aspects in the market or ways to obtain loans, "and our part," she said, is to inform these interested women of ways and means that could help them.

According to Mrs. Jandaneh, the financial institutions that are willing to give women who complete the training course a loan include, the Development and Employment Fund, banks and the loan Guarantee Corporation and others.

"It is almost guaranteed that when women graduate from the course and present their proposal to establish a business they will be granted loans from these financial institutions," Mrs. Jandaneh said.

She told the Jordan Times that the participants will also be given information about

market demand.

According to Mrs. Jandaneh, following the training course, the participants will have a two-day period to propose their projects to the financial institutions for loan approval.

Mrs. Jandaneh said that the BPWC will follow up on the women after they receive the loans.

"Our club will help these women when they start their businesses and continue training them as aspects of the market business or in any other field that will help them succeed," she said.

Mrs. Jandaneh said that the 30 women were chosen out of 80 applicants who approached the club asking for loans and assistance.

"We chose the women based on their level of education, interest and the ideas to establish an enterprise," she said.

Mrs. Jandaneh said that the BPWC move was spurred by the large numbers of unemployed women in Jordan and worldwide.

"We always think of ways to eliminate unemployment locally and on a national level, and we believe that this step will help support our national economy and increase the role of women in social development for her family and country," Mrs. Jandaneh said.

The workshop, which will be held at the Amman Chamber of Commerce, is part of the BPWC activities to mark International Women's Day. It will end on March 29, and is organised in cooperation with the U.N. Economics and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Refugee camp representatives thank King

AMMAN (Petra) — Representatives of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan Monday sent cables of thanks and appreciation to His Majesty King Hussein for his support for Palestinian refugees and for recently hosting an informal meeting of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) donor states and countries hosting refugees. The representatives of the camps voiced appreciation of Jordan's stand in rejecting any cuts in services offered by UNRWA to refugees. The cables were signed by representatives of the Wihdat, Baqaa, Zarqa, Hittien, Sukhneh, Azmi Al Mufri, Irbid, Taliyibeh, Souf, Jerash, Madaba and Haj Al Amir Hassan camps.

Crown Prince receives World Bank official

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday received at the Royal Court Director of the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa Department Ram Chopra. Prince Hassan and Mr. Chopra discussed Jordan-World Bank relations and development projects that will be carried out in the region in the peace era. The meeting was attended by Planning Minister Rima Khalaf.

Sharif Zeid congratulates basketball team

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday expressed pride over Jordan's qualification to the under-18 World Basketball Championships after capturing the third place in the U-18 Asian Championship which concluded in Manila, the Philippines, on Saturday. Sharif Zeid said this achievement is a source of pride for Jordan and manifests the ability of our youth to compete with other teams from the world. In a cable sent to Youth Minister Awad Kheifaf, the prime minister congratulated the team and wished its players success.

Crown Prince calls for defined programme to develop higher education in Kingdom

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has called for preparing a well-defined programme to develop higher education in the Kingdom.

In a letter sent to the chairmen and members of the Council of Higher Education at their meeting Monday, Prince Hassan said such a programme should define the various elements for developing higher education in Jordan.

He said the current stage through which Jordan is passing requires that it be able to attract the needed support for its development projects, especially those related to developing and training human resources and enabling them to deal with developments "so as to guarantee ourselves a suitable place among the civilised nations in the future and to preserve the status that we strive for."

He said the great developments in scientific, technological, economic and social fields brought with them grave challenges which require Jordan to draw up defined policies for higher education institutions which should be able to bring forth generations capable of dealing with the needs and challenges of the age.

The Crown Prince said the peace era projects, the economic development plans and the technological revolution will bring with them new dimensions for human resources development.

Prince Hassan thanked all members of the 45 committees which since 1986 have worked on drawing up plans for and developing higher education in Jordan.

A memorandum was attached to the Crown Prince's letter offering ideas and recommendations related to the objectives of upgrading the country's higher education system.

Following are highlights of Prince Hassan's memorandum to the council in which he first stressed that he was keen to discuss the issues therein with the council members in an objective and professional manner.

In the memorandum, the Crown Prince reviewed efforts exerted since 1986 to develop the higher education sector through proper programmes, starting with the formation of the higher education working team and 45 other specialised committees.

In 1992, he said, a national task force was formed to discuss issues mentioned in re-

ports prepared by the working team and its committees.

"I have a detailed record of the efforts and attempts to support higher education... and all that makes me ask what plans and programmes did we prepare towards the future? Did we prepare graduates from our universities to face these challenges... to be able to deal with reality in the last years of the 20th century and the coming century?" Prince Hassan asked.

He said developing the higher education sectors should not only encompass reconsidering policies, but should also include a comprehensive development process with clear-cut features and plans.

He said the quality of education should be upgraded since Jordan has taken major strides on quantitative levels.

The Prince also called for establishing councils to control the quality of education at Jordanian universities and for finding a mechanism to accredit universities and evaluate their educational programmes through their graduates.

Prince Hassan said the Kingdom's experience with private universities was still short and that there is a need



Minister of Higher Education Monday presides over a meeting of the Council of Higher Education (Petra photo)

to follow up their performance in order to contribute to their success.

The Crown Prince also called for reconsidering legislation governing the establishment of private universities and relations between them, especially the private universities law, governing their work, and the companies law, governing the work of investors, to ensure the independence of these universities and make certain they are working as academic institutions, not commercial enterprises.

He said these universities have already started to reduce the burdens shouldered by government universities in the undergraduate studies, and this requires that state

universities re-focus their efforts on higher studies and scientific research.

Noting that state universities are suffering from financial problems because of the lack of available resources, he called for studying possible financial resources that might meet the minimum requirements of these universities.

The meeting of the Higher Education Council was chaired by Minister of Higher Education Rabea Saud and attended by several ministers, university presidents and other council members.

Following the meeting Dr. Saud told Jordan Television that the council had formed a committee to review the recommendations included in

the Crown Prince's memorandum and prepare a corresponding set of feasible proposals which could be implemented starting this coming academic year.

Dr. Saud said that after the committee has completed its review, the council would seek to meet with Prince Hassan to discuss its proposals which, he said, would target two primary aims: a systematic and clear programme to upgrade the higher education system, and a plan to obtain the necessary funding for such an undertaking as well as plugging financial deficits in budgetary allocations for this project.

The minister said that the proposed meeting will take place on March 27.

Irbid police arrest 5 burglary suspects

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Irbid police Monday announced the arrest, over a two-week period, of five suspects in connection with more than 35 burglaries in different parts of Irbid.

Brigadier General Hisham Ensour said the latest arrest took place last week when the authorities apprehended a university student suspected of burglarising student dormitories while the students were attending lectures.

Police would not say which university or universities were involved, except that the crimes occurred in Irbid. The only universities in Irbid governorate are Yarmouk University and the Jordan University of Science and Technology.

The police official said that police monitoring of the dormitories and information obtained from students led to the arrest of a 32-year-old male.

A police official told the Jordan Times that they believe the suspect used his fiancée's car to transport the stolen goods to Amman.

The official said that the suspect's fiancée said she had no knowledge that her car was being used for that purpose.

The police chief identified the suspect as R.T.A., a student who returned to Jordan after failing in his studies overseas. The suspect was attending one of Irbid's universities.

According to Brig. Gen. Ensour, police received several complaints from shopowners in Irbid who said they had been burglarised.

He said that after days of monitoring the area, they arrested a man while he was attempting to break down the door of one of the shops at midnight.

"After we arrested him, he confessed to all 25 shop burglaries and led police to another partner who was hiding the stolen goods," said the police official.

The final case, said the official, involved a trader who complained to police that some of his stolen merchandise was being sold in the market.

The official said that after monitoring the market, police apprehended two men aged 37 and 26.

"The men used to steal the merchandise from the victim's warehouse and sell it in the Irbid market," he said.

According to the police official, Irbid police retrieved most of the stolen goods and returned them to their owners.

Relatives of jailed Jordanians in Kuwait stage sit-in at Red Cross branch office

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Family members and relatives of Jordanians serving jail terms in Kuwait on charges of "collaborating" with Iraq during the Iraqi occupation of the emirate on Monday appealed for International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) intervention to help some of the detainees who are on a hunger-strike.

The appeal was made during a token sit-in that about 30 demonstrators, mostly women and children, staged in front of the ICRC office in Amman.

In a memo they handed over to the head of the ICRC delegation in Amman, the demonstrators said some of the prisoners in Kuwait were on a hunger-strike since mid-February in a bid to highlight their case, and at least four of them were hospitalised.

The detainees argue that they were unjustly imprisoned and were not given a fair trial. They say that their imprisonment was politically motivated since Kuwait interpreted Jordan's refusal to endorse a military solution to end the

Iraqi occupation of the emirate as support for the invasion itself.

Sentences handed down to them by a Kuwaiti martial law court and a state security court ranged from death to jail terms of 10 to 25 years. The death sentences were later commuted to life terms.

International human rights organisations and lawyers' groups support the detainees' cause and say that the accused were not given a fair trial.

Several international groups have called on the Kuwaiti government to order a retrial where all evidence produced by the prosecution could be closely reexamined.

Kuwait has rejected the calls.

According to family members and relatives, nearly 20 of the 60-plus Jordanian detainees in Kuwait are on hunger-strike, and four of them whose health deteriorated because of their fasting were admitted to hospital this week.

They launched the hunger-strike to bring their case to the attention of the emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad, hoping that the emir would include

them in his annual amnesty for prisoners issued to mark the 'Eid Al Fitr feast, relatives say.

But they were excluded from the amnesty, which was released by the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

"This left them with no choice but to continue their hunger-strike, and the condition of those hospitalised is really bad," said one of the relatives of a detainee who is serving a 10-year term.

Most of the hunger-strikers were journalists working for the state-run Kuwait News Agency or independent newspapers. They were formally charged and convicted in summary trials of "collaborating" with Iraq during the occupation by working for the Iraqi-run Al Nida newspaper.

The memo submitted to the ICRC, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, called on the all-Swiss humanitarian agency to "shoulder its responsibility... and intervene to save the lives" of the hunger-strikers.

The sit-in and the memo were designed to "underline the plight of our husbands, brothers and sons

who are unjustly jailed in Kuwait for the past four years," said the wife of one of the detainees.

"No one cares for our plight" added the woman, who, like other demonstrators, insisted on anonymity saying they feared reprisals against the prisoners in Kuwait.

"We have issued repeated appeals to almost everyone in the world, but no one seems to really understand the issue or care to do something about it," said the brother of another detainee.

No immediate comment was available from the ICRC. But the agency was expected to forward the one-page Arabic-language memo to its headquarters in Geneva and office in Kuwait.

In Kuwait, the ICRC regional delegate, Arnold Luthold, said the organisation was monitoring the hunger-strike "very closely," but declined to give details.

Ali Al Baghli, a Kuwaiti parliament deputy and member of the human rights committee, said the hunger-strikers were in good condition and there were no indications their health was in danger.

Culture minister says four factors contributed to hindering development

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Minister of Culture, Samir Habashneh, has told a Copenhagen international parliamentary conference that four factors contributed to hindering development in Third World countries, and these were war, the lack of popular participation, meagre spending on education and dwindling aid extended by the rich countries.

"Wars must be prevented by every method," Mr. Habashneh said, adding that wars "deepen poverty and unemployment."

The minister, who was addressing the steering committee of the International Parliamentary Conference for

Population and Development, said that for peace in the Middle East to be lasting "The Palestinian: People should obtain their freedom and right to establish an independent state."

Mr. Habashneh said that the lack of democracy in the Third World created "a suitable environment for corruption" and that without democracy social planning would not succeed.

Mr. Habashneh told his fellow parliamentarians that there was no discrimination against women in Jordan and that all of what Jordan needed was more women in senior posts.

"One of the main aspects

of women's problems is concerned with the women themselves," the minister said.

"The reason behind this is that women's organisations are very weak and fail to attract women to become members."

"From our experience in Jordan and many other countries, we cite no discriminations against women, they have all their rights, socially and politically," he added.

Education, he said, should be linked with productivity in developing countries. "The right form of subsidy therefore needed from rich nations is not in giving us food, but in helping us to produce it."

WHAT'S GOING ON

NEWS

★ ABC News Highlights and McNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

LECTURES

★ Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "Germany and the Arabs" by Dr. Mohammad Abu Hantash at Goethe-Institut at 6:00 p.m.
★ Lecture (in Arabic) entitled "How to Comprehend Legends: Basic Matters in Definition" by Mr. Firas Al Sawah at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by several artists entitled "Faces" at the Baqaa Art Gallery, Fuhais.
★ Exhibition of paintings by Nazli Irtenelek at Alia Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of art by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Hana Malallah at Ab'ad Art Gallery.

★ Three exhibitions of plastic art by George Edibi, Abdullah Kamaleh, and Mohammad Majali at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition by Syrian artist Marwan Qassab Bashi at Darat Al Funun. Also showing a permanent exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.

★ Exhibition of art by Consuelo Gonzalez at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).

★ Exhibition of women's abstract artists entitled "The Women Through the Eyes of Women" at Baladna Art Gallery.

★ "Young America" exhibit with photographs featuring Americans of all ages at the American Centre.

The Minister for Post & Telecommunications announces the vacancy of Director Finance & Administration

in the new Telecommunications Regulatory Office

The Opportunity

In order to strengthen the ability of Jordan's telecommunications sector to deliver a top quality range of services to the people and businesses of Jordan, a programme of reconstruction of the sector is currently in progress. An important part of this programme is the establishment of the Telecommunications Regulatory Office which will be responsible for, inter alia, licensing the telecommunications service providers, spectrum management, setting and monitoring service standards, defining equipment specifications, and controlling tariffs.

The Executive Team is now being put in place, and each of its members will play a challenging and central role in the development and success of the TRO, as well as in the future of the telecommunications sector in Jordan. Joining the Team at this early stage offers an ideal chance to lead the process of selecting and developing the Finance & Administration team.

The Vacancy

We are seeking candidates for the post of Director, Finance & Administration. The post reports to the Director General and carries full responsibility for a wide range of financial and administrative activities. The precise list of responsibilities will be developed in discussion with the successful candidate. As a member of the Executive Team, the person will also contribute to the general management of the TRO.

The post is based in Amman, but some travel may be necessary from time to time.

You, the Candidate

You should be a professionally qualified financial manager, educated to degree standard. You will have private sector experience, ideally in an technological or engineering sector (though not necessarily telecommunications). You will be used to handling the full range of financial analysis and reporting activities. You will understand and be familiar with the use of desktop computers and financial software (but you will not necessarily be an expert in this area). You must be able to demonstrate sound communication skills in English and Arabic (essential to present complex financial information simply and persuasively in a predominantly technological environment).

Age is unlikely to be a limiting factor, though younger candidates will need to convince us of their maturity and depth of experience.

To apply ...

You should send a full up-to-date CV and covering letter (in English) to the address below indicating your strengths in relation to the post as described, and stating current salary & benefits. A shortlist of suitable applicants will be selected for interview at the offices of the Regulatory Office near 7th Circle. Unsuccessful applicant will be notified and their CVs will be returned.

We wish to make an early appointment so your application should arrive by 22nd March at the latest.

Mr. M Khasawneh Telecoms Regulatory Office
PO Box 850967 Amman 11185 Jordan

Balladur bewails 'nasty' campaign but says he is not finished

PARIS (AP) — Conservative Premier Edouard Balladur said Sunday that the presidential campaign was turning nasty with personal attacks against him but that it was still possible to reverse his sagging performance in the polls.

Calls by some conservatives for him to pull out to help assure victory for fellow conservative Jacques Chirac left him indifferent, he said. "I say to the French: Watch out. This campaign is taking a very bad turn," Mr. Balladur said on French television. Opponents, he said, are using "nasty procedures" and "low manoeuvres" to undermine him.

Mr. Balladur spoke two days after making public his personal worth following inuendoes he enriched himself through under-the-table manoeuvres while moving between his political career and his job as the head of a large company, GSI.

France's political climate

was growing feverish as the April 23 first-round of the election approached. The winner of the May 7 second round will replace Socialist President Francois Mitterrand, ending his second seven-year term.

Mr. Mitterrand, meanwhile, abandoning a long silence during the campaign, publicly backed the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, who is even with or surpassing Mr. Balladur in most polls.

On Saturday, the centrist coalition, the Union for French Democracy, split in its previously solid support for Mr. Balladur with a wing rallying to the camp of Mr. Chirac, the mayor of Paris who within weeks went from underdog to leading candidate.

Last week, a group of artists and cultural figures usually associated with the left decided to back Mr. Chirac, a Gaullist like Mr. Balladur.

Speaking on the political talk show 7/7, Mr. Balladur said he took "with great indifference" calls by some conservatives to bow out of the presidential race to avoid a rightist split that would serve up victory to the Socialists.

"I have the firm intention of making progress and fighting," he said.

Mr. Balladur told a gathering of UDF sympathisers Sunday that he thought he still could win.

"The situation was better a month ago. We must do everything so that in a month it returns to what it was," the premier said, adding he thought this was "possible."

Mr. Balladur said that, if elected, he would organise a referendum in September on a number of issues, including the use of a referendum in deciding policy on the length of the presidential mandate, currently seven years, renewable once.

The tenor of the campaign has become the focus of talk as divisions plague the conservatives and the centrists. Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, Mr. Chirac's chief backer, Sunday night condemned "this campaign of denigration."

But no candidate seemed able to spare himself from the caustic comment at each chance, even Mr. Balladur.

The premier, alluding to the rallying of artists to Mr. Chirac, said that "the caviar left has discovered the cow's head," the lowest cut of meat.

Far right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen said that "show biz's" empathy for Mr. Chirac reminded him of the migration of fleas on a dying dog.

"Flees have an instinct to survive," Mr. Le Pen told a rally in Nantes. "They jump to the first dog that passes to try to survive."



Cuban President Fidel Castro returns the salute of the Republican Guard Monday as he arrives in France for a three-day visit, during which he will lunch with French President Francois Mitterrand (AFP photo)

Fidel Castro begins visit to France

PARIS (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro arrived in Paris Monday on a controversial three-day visit to France, airport officials said.

Mr. Castro was invited by Spaniard Federico Mayor, the director-general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) which is based in Paris.

Meetings have also been arranged with French leaders including outgoing President Francois Mitterrand and National Assembly President Philippe Seguin.

The visit was marked by controversy before it began, with Foreign Minister Alain Juppe saying Sunday that Mr. Castro needed to make big

progress on human rights in Cuba.

Mr. Castro, stunned by most Western countries, is expected to seek support for an end to a U.S. trade embargo on his island nation.

France will give full honours to the 68-year-old Communist leader during his three-day stay and has stepped up security to protect him.

But Mr. Juppe, a member of the conservative government that shares power with the Socialist Mitterrand, sought to distance himself from the guest in a radio interview.

Asked about a comment by the French president's wife, Danielle Mitterrand, that

Mr. Castro was not a dictator, Mr. Juppe told Radio Luxembourg: "He has been one, and when you have been one, it is hard to get rid of that, if I judge by the situation of human rights in Cuba today."

"We consider that Cuba must make progress towards democracy and respect for human rights, which are not respected as they should be in Cuba," Mr. Juppe added.

But he criticised the 34-year-old U.S. trade embargo against the Caribbean island as the wrong way to achieve change in Cuba.

Mr. Castro arrived in Paris from a U.N. summit on world poverty in Copenhagen.

Salinas moves from Mexico to U.S. for good

MEXICO CITY (R) — Former Mexican President Carlos Salinas De Gortari, under pressure with the arrest of his brother on murder charges and allegations his government was to blame for an economic troubles, has left Mexico for what was described as virtual exile in the United States, according to media reports.

Mr. Salinas, his wife and three children left for the United States on a private flight Saturday afternoon and would not be returning, the Mexico City daily La Jornada said Sunday.

It added he flew to New York and would likely move on to Boston to begin a new life.

The weekly magazine Proceso added that what it termed as Salinas' "exile pact" was agreed on at a meeting with President

Ernesto Zedillo, his hand-picked successor, at the presidential palace Los Pinos last Thursday night.

The accord binds Mr. Salinas to stay out of public life but did not say what he received in return. Proceso said in its latest edition which appeared Sunday.

A government spokesman and a man who answered the telephone at Mr. Salinas' office in Mexico City both said they could not confirm or deny the report.

"We know nothing, there is nobody here," the man at Mr. Salinas' office told Reuters. Mr. Salinas' six-year presidential term ended last Dec. 1.

In Monday editions, the New York Times cited senior government officials as saying Mr. Salinas had gone into virtual exile.

In a dispatch from Mexico

City, it quoted one official as saying that the former president would not be prevented from returning to Mexico, but had agreed to stay abroad "for a considerable time."

Another official quoted by the newspaper calculated that the period Mr. Salinas would stay abroad would be five years or eight months, or the remainder of Mr. Zedillo's term.

Mr. Salinas flew to New York but planned to go on to Boston, where his three college-aged children were expected to study, officials told the newspaper. Mr. Salinas himself received a doctorate at Harvard University.

A senior Mexican government official contacted by Reuters said he could not immediately comment on the New York Times report that Mr. Salinas would stay out of

the country for a considerable length of time.

In Washington, the State Department said it did not know if Mr. Salinas had in fact travelled to the United States, but suggested there was no reason he would be unwelcome.

"We don't know if in fact Carlos Salinas is in the United States," a department spokesman said. "He is a private citizen. We are unaware of any impediments to Mr. Salinas' travelling to the United States."

State Department officials said Mr. Salinas presumably had an indefinite tourist visa dating from years ago, but they could not immediately confirm this because, they said, issuance records are normally kept for only one year.

Ex-Soviet states paint bleak picture of upheaval

COPENHAGEN (R) — Leaders of former Soviet republics, speaking at a U.N. Social Summit, painted a bleak landscape of economic and political upheaval more than three years after the collapse of the Communist system.

They called on the international community to help heal social ills in their new countries to help them avoid dropping to the levels of poverty in some countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia — the main focus of the week-long conference.

Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze, whose mountainous state is plagued by inter-ethnic conflict and economic collapse, blamed the lack of a cohesive post-cold war strategy Sunday for spawning "new threats" in the former Soviet Union.

These included "mounting economic crises, capable of calling in question the very survival of the newly independent states... rampant ethno-dictatorships that provoke aggressions and con-

licts... unparalleled devaluation of human life."

But Mr. Shevardnadze, a former Soviet foreign minister credited with playing a key role in ending the cold war, said the outlook could be very different if the former Communist countries were given the right support.

"The potential of these states is such that it could very easily and rapidly be activated. Help us stand on our feet, and we ourselves will become donor countries for others," he declared.

Speeches from 12 leaders of the 15 former Soviet republics, stretching from the Baltic Sea to Central Asia, underscored the differences in what once was a monolithic, totalitarian state.

President Haydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan bemoaned the effects of inter-ethnic conflict with neighbouring Armenia.

"Huge economic damage resulting from aggression has deeply affected all the population of Azerbaijan, sharply worsening the living standards of the majority of

people, and has put them on the verge of poverty," Mr. Aliyev said.

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev stayed at home during the conference, dealing with a weekend constitutional crisis in which he dissolved parliament.

The Slav states of Belarus and Ukraine have avoided internal armed conflict since independence. But their presidents said special problems — such as the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear-plant catastrophe — sucked up a disproportionate amount of resources, leaving little for social programmes.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said financial considerations forced his cash-strapped country, sandwiched between Poland and Russia, to stop the costly dismantling of conventional weapons under international treaties.

Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin made no direct mention of Moscow's military campaign in the separatist Chechnya re-

gion, which has killed thousands of civilians and provoked international condemnation of human rights violations.

Instead, he said Russia was doing everything possible to observe basic social rights as economic reforms took hold.

The three Baltic states, which are not members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and better-off economically, stood somewhat aside, asserting that individual responsibility was the answer to resolving economic and social problems.

They proposed holding an international conference in the Latvian capital, Riga, on transferring the proceeds of nuclear disarmament to social goals.

Until just three and one half years ago, when totalitarianism gave way to the winds of freedom, the cause of the individual was taboo in my country," said Estonian President Lennart Meri of Estonia. "Individual choice is the only basis for free and strong societies..."

Sinn Fein leader lashes out at Major

NEW YORK (R) — Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), lashed back on Sunday at British Prime Minister John Major for linking his group with terrorism, saying it was time to stop "making excuses."

Mr. Major should follow the example of President Clinton and the Dublin government and accept Sinn Fein's democratic mandate. It is six months since the IRA cessation (of hostilities). The British government should stop making excuses and start making peace," Mr. Adams said Sunday through his spokesman in New York.

Mr. Major, while speaking to reporters at the start of a three-day visit to the Middle East was asked why he objected to Mr. Adams when the British prime minister himself planned to talk Tuesday to PLO leader and former guerrilla Yasser Arafat.

"Terrorism has now been denounced by Chairman Arafat. I have not seen it comprehensively denounced by Mr. Adams," Mr. Major said.

"Chairman Arafat is now actively opposing terrorism. I'm afraid that Sinn Fein is still directly associated with a fully formed terrorist organisation," he added.

Mr. Adams commenting on the issue during an appearance before the ancient order of Hibernians fraternal group in Albany,

the New York's state capital, noted that the Israeli government and the PLO had made a peace treaty.

"The British government have yet to grasp the nettle of making a peace treaty. That's what the talks need to be about. What I have is what Arafat never had, is an electoral mandate which John Major doesn't have in my country and I think it's a bit insensitive of Mr. Major to make those comparisons."

"It's right for him to talk to Yasser Arafat and his right for him to talk to Sinn Fein. If John Major says we'll talk tomorrow, I will catch the first plane back," Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Adams is on a 10-day visit to the United States during which he will meet President Bill Clinton Friday, St. Patrick's Day, at the White House.

Mr. Major was furious last week when Mr. Clinton gave Mr. Adams a U.S. visa to raise funds for Sinn Fein and invited him to a White House St. Patrick's Day party in exchange for a Sinn Fein commitment to discuss decommissioning IRA arms.

Mr. Adams' visit began Saturday night.

On Saturday afternoon, Mr. Adams attended a New York fund-raiser for Sinn Fein in the borough of Queens attracting about 1,000 Irish-Americans. He reminded them that the "real" peace talks have yet to

begin between Ireland and Britain.

In Albany Mr. Adams was expected to raise more than \$1,000 from more than 500 who attended including some who made extra donations.

Suffering from flu and fever, Mr. Adams appeared in Albany with a heavy security guard and New York State Police. On Monday he is due to meet New York Gov. George Pataki.

The IRA called off hostilities last September after a 25-year war against British rule in Northern Ireland. Protestant gunmen, fighting to preserve British rule, called a matching truce in October.

At his Queens appearance in a catering hall, where supporters each paid \$20 to hear Mr. Adams, the crowd cheered and applauded the Irish leader's speech: "We still have over 30,000 heavily armed British troops" in Northern Ireland. We want those troops decommissioned, permanently."

"We want every single prisoner, loyalist and Republican, here in the USA and back home in Ireland with their families where they belong and we want discrimination and inequality permanently decommissioned also," he said.

"We want all guns — British, Unionist, loyalist, RUC, Republicans — permanently taken out of Irish politics," he said.

Astronaut has high hopes for joint space shot

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan (R) — U.S. astronaut Norman Thagard said Monday he hoped his historic joint space shot with Russia would lead to closer cooperation between the former cold war foes.

"This programme has demonstrated very well that the two sides can work together smoothly," Mr. Thagard told a news conference near the Baikonur site where he will blast off Tuesday for 90 days in space.

He will be the first American to take part in a Russian space flight, and his spell in space on the orbiting Mir station will be the longest undertaken by a U.S. astronaut.

"There is no reason to believe that Russians and Americans cannot be great friends in the future," he said, adding that together they could "do great things in space."

Thagard, 51, Russian flight Commander Vladimir Dezhnev and engineer Gennady Strekalov will be launched in a Soyuz rocket at 11:33 a.m. Tuesday (0913 GMT) from the former Soviet Union's main launch site in the steppe of Kazakhstan.

The Soyuz is scheduled to dock with the Mir at 0756 GMT Thursday.

Thagard, 51, will be on his fifth launch into space, and

Strekalov his sixth. Commander Dezhnev, the youngest of the team at 32, will be on his maiden flight.

The three looked relaxed as they smiled for photographers from behind a glass partition — a precaution to guard against infection — beside their backup crew Bonnie Dunbar, flight Commander Anatoly Solovoyov and engineer Nikolai Budarin.

Speaking through a microphone from behind the partition, Thagard said that apart from family and friends, he would most of all miss his work in electronics, and the Russian cat he adopted during his stay at Zvyozdny Gorodok (Star City), near Moscow, where he and Dunbar have been in training for a year.

Asked how he felt about having to spend two days in a capsule 1.80 metres (5 ft 11 inches) high, Thagard, who is 5 ft 9 (1.75m), said he was "just the right size."

The three crew members will spend most of the flight strapped into seats in the capsule.

Thagard said the launch facilities at Baikonur were much the same as those in the United States and anticipated no problems.

His Russian flight Commander Strekalov dismissed the idea that the mini-invasion of Baikonur by a posse of U.S. reporters might

make him feel as if he were about to ride an American rocket from the United States.

"We have to demonstrate our capabilities," he said. Budarin, in the second crew which is due to replace Thagard's team in the Mir space station in June, said he had no uneasy feeling about flying with a U.S. astronaut as Russian cosmonauts had plenty of experience in international cooperation.

The medical experiments Thagard and Dunbar will carry out will give the United States its first medical data on the effects of long stays in space since the Skylab missions of the 1970s.

The experiments form part of a joint project to build an international station, dubbed Alpha, by early next century.

The three-phase construction of the space station, due to be completed in June 2002, brings Moscow and Washington together with Canada, the European Space Agency and Japan in a programme to create a permanent orbiting science centre.

The U.S. embassy in Moscow Monday denied a television report that a senior member of a U.S. team preparing for a joint space mission with Russia this week had been expelled for spying.

The private Russian NTV television channel said Sunday in an unsecured report that the American was a consultant to the U.S. team.

The U.S. embassy said the report involved Ken Cameron, who spent several months last year at the Russian Astronaut Training Centre of Star City helping set up the mission. He recently came back for a week.

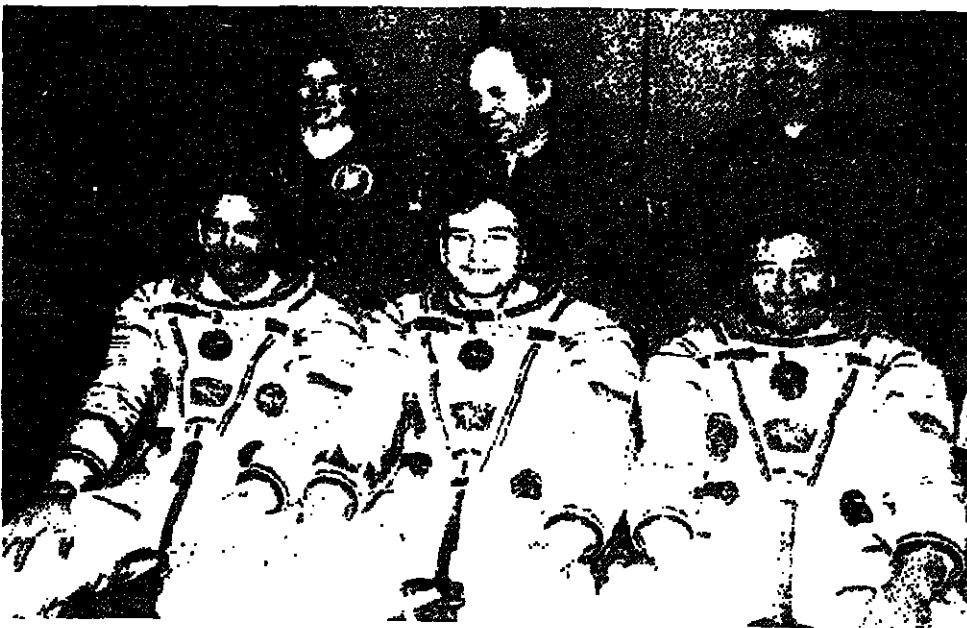
"He returned to the United States as planned," the embassy said in a statement. A spokesman for the Russian Space Agency, Anatoly Tkachov, reacting to the NTV report, said: "We cannot comment because we know nothing about it."

The U.S. embassy statement said: "The NTV story represents a misunderstanding of the purpose of our joint space programme, which is being undertaken under detailed agreements reached by the Russian and U.S. governments."

The statement added: "The cooperative exchange of information is a normal and essential part of the programme for both sides."

Cameron has been named commander of another shuttle mission which will link up with the MIR space station in October.

Meanwhile, a U.S. shuttle management review panel has told NASA that operation of the U.S. space shuttle should be consolidated under a single government contract and eventually should be



From left sitting: Space crew members Norman Thagard of the USA, Russia's V. Dezhnev and G. Strekalov are joined by (left to right) Bonnie Dunbar, A. Solovoyov and N. Budarin as they pose for a picture after they tried on

their suits for the upcoming Soyuz mission of Thagard, Dezhnev and Strekalov to start Tuesday. For the first time an American is launched on a Russian spaceship (AFP photo)

transferred to the private sector.

The review, headed by Dr. Christopher C. Kraft, a key figure in the Apollo Moon Programme also concluded that the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) should relax some of its safety and quality controls on the shuttle and take a "customer-oriented" approach to hauling space cargo.

"If the (shuttle) programme is to meet the challenge of

reducing costs... it will require a major change," wrote the Kraft panel in a report scheduled for release Wednesday. A draft of the report, four months in the making, was obtained by Reuters.

The report contends that two things are hampering efforts to cut the agency's budget — a duplicative and expensive "safety shield" created after the 1986 in-flight explosion that destroyed

shuttle Challenger and killed astronauts, and a management structure that diffuses individual responsibility and encourages "expensive habits."

"Safety is one of those terms that can be used to hide behind and prevent necessary change and innovation," the Kraft team wrote. "The challenge lies in requiring NASA and its contractors to totally revamp these expensive habits and still operate a safe and reliable vehicle."

Zemeckis wins Best Director Award for Gump

NEW YORK (AP) — Robert Zemeckis, director of the hit movie Forrest Gump, has won the top award from the Director's Guild of America. The prize was announced Saturday at a New York ceremony and was to be presented to Zemeckis later Saturday evening in Los Angeles at a second ceremony. The other nominees for Best Director were: Quentin Tarantino, Pulp Fiction; Frank Darabont, The Shawshank Redemption; and Mike Newell, Four Weddings And A Funeral. The Director's Guild Award often is an indicator of who will be chosen Best Director at the Academy Awards, to be given out this year on March 27.

Forrest Gump has 13 Oscar nominations, including Best Director. Attendees at the New York ceremony included Michael Moore, director of the 1989 documentary Roger And Me, Barbara Feldon, best known as Agent 99 in the Get Smart television series. The evening's biggest draw, Robert Redford, was a no-show due to illness. Redford was nominated for Quiz Show.

U.K.'s Spitting Image TV satire is scrapped

LONDON (R) — The ground-breaking British puppet show Spitting Image, which showed Queen Elizabeth in hair curlers and Margaret Thatcher as a crazed harrier, is to be scrapped. The television satire, which caricatured public figures in puppet form, was once watched by audiences of 15 million. But the ratings have now fallen by more than 50 per cent and producers Central Television said they were looking for a different format for a puppet-based show. Critics complained that the series had lost its sting. Fans loved its representations of the queen as a middle-aged housewife, Prince Charles as a hapless victim of his growing ears and Prime Minister John Major as a completely grey man. "It was quite a status symbol to be on Spitting Image. The constituents seemed to take us more seriously," said Edwina Currie, a Conservative Party member of parliament who was frequently lambasted on the show. "In retrospect, I think they got my caricature about right. I grew quite fond of it," she said.

Bolshoi shivers in Russia's wind of change

MOSCOW (AFP) — The chilly winds of post-Soviet reform and turmoil in Russia are also blowing at the Bolshoi Theatre, the famous showcase of Russian theatre and dance. Eleven dancers of the Bolshoi's ballet company were suspended at the weekend for doing the unthinkable — refusing to dance when the curtain went up on the scheduled performance of Romeo And Juliet. They told the startled audience that they were too "depressed and broken-hearted" to perform, because of the resignation Thursday of the company's old-guard choreographer, Yuri Grigorovich, aged 68. Grigorovich, a top choreographer for more than three decades, claimed he was forced to resign because of his opposition to sweeping changes at the Bolshoi. He had objected to reforms at the Bolshoi decreed by President Boris Yeltsin last September which would scrap permanent contracts for dancers and singers in order to make them more competitive. Grigorovich, who is also artistic director, made his name in the 1960s with his staging of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. His reign produced what many consider a golden age of the Bolshoi Ballet. But he has been criticised in recent years for failing to produce any original choreography since 1962, and for his authoritarian style. The Bolshoi has been riven with rivalries between those for and against him. One of the Bolshoi's principal dancers, Nina Ananiashvili, said Friday that she was tired "of all the quarrels and mud-throwing." She said: "The Bolshoi's glory is fading. We have been organising assemblies and strikes, but we haven't had a single meeting for 10 years about artistic issues." Experts say the Bolshoi, once the glory of the world's opera and ballet, has fallen behind more innovative centres such as New York, Paris and London — the victim of hide-bound bureaucrats and the harsh realities of a market economy.

PPI leader fires 3 aides after Berlusconi snub

ROME (Agencies) — The leader of Italy's centrist Popular Party (PPI) dismissed three aides Monday in an escalation of the bitter dispute over an electoral alliance with former Premier Silvio Berlusconi.

Party officials said Rocco Buttiglione, the national secretary of the PPI, dismissed Franco Marini, who had been seen as his possible successor, Giuseppe Gargani, who is in charge of state administration issues, and Luca Borgomeo, head of the Christian Democratic newspaper Il Popolo.

The PPI, formerly the Christian Democrats that dominated Italian post-war politics, Saturday put off a decision on whether to split until Thursday after Mr. Buttiglione's electoral deal with Mr. Berlusconi.

Before Saturday's vote Mr. Buttiglione had said he would resign if the party rejected his decision to join the Freedom Alliance coalition ahead of the April 23 regional elections.

The Alliance comprises Mr. Berlusconi's rightist Forza Italia, the post-fascist National Alliance and the Christian Democratic Centre, another faction of the former ruling Christian Democrats.

But in an interview with

the daily La Stampa published Monday he said he would continue his fight for a moderate political centre and probably announce Tuesday if he would step down.

Commenting on Mr. Buttiglione's decision to fire him and the two other party officials, Mr. Borgomeo said "Buttiglione is no longer party secretary. He was forced to step down and can no longer appoint or dismiss anybody."

At Saturday's vote Mr. Buttiglione's deal was narrowly rejected in a 102 to 99 vote of a national executive meeting.

Mr. Buttiglione's followers have argued that the vote was rigged and are trying to have it voided.

Meanwhile, a confident Prime Minister Lamberto Dini prepared Monday for a showdown with parliament over his budget plans, but Italian financial markets seemed less convinced he would win. "Approval," was Mr. Dini's blunt answer to the Italian reporters at the U.N. Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen when asked Sunday how he thought the vote would go Tuesday in the lower chamber of deputies.

But the lira skidded close to record lows against the German mark as anxious investors braced for the con-

frontation in the chamber where Mr. Dini has not outright majority.

"The vote in the chamber looks 50-50," said one foreign exchange trader as the lira slumped to 1,210 to the mark, within a whisker of its 1,215 all-time low.

The outcome is delicately balanced as former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right Freedom Alliance is expected to oppose the 20-trillion lire (\$11.8 billion) plan aimed at halting the state deficit back on target.

Markets fear that defeat would not only topple Mr. Dini and his government of experts but would also delay any serious action on the budget for months.

Mr. Dini, a former central banker, made the budget package one of four policy goals when he took office in January.

He says he will resign once the programme, which also includes reform to Italy's hugely expensive pension system, has been implemented.

But the pledge has not satisfied media magnate Berlusconi who has been furiously demanding snap elections because the state pensions body did not have enough money.

This was half the budget deficit for that year.

hard right allies in the National Alliance want a firm date for the elections in return for backing the budget.

Despite market nervousness, which saw the Milan Bourse also shed over one per cent, many financial analysts felt that Mr. Dini's confidence was well placed.

"I think the budget will be approved in the chamber with some minor changes," said Jose-Luis Alzola, Italian analyst with Salomon Brothers.

But Mr. Alzola and other analysts said that Italy's battered markets would find only temporary respite with the current storm over the groggy lira and Italian bonds set to rage on if pension reform does not follow quickly.

"I am less optimistic about the pension reforms," said Mr. Alzola. "I can't see any meaningful reform of the system will be secured in the near term in the government/unions negotiations."

In 1993, the last year for which figures are available, the state had to pay 70 trillion lire (\$41 billion) in pensions because the state pensions body did not have enough money.

This was half the budget deficit for that year.

Supporters, opponents of Rao come to blows after poll debacle

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Supporters and opponents of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao came to blows Monday at a meeting called by dissidents in the ruling Congress (I) Party to discuss its latest debacle at the polls.

Two pro-Rao Congress MPs were manhandled and another Rao supporter roughed up as fistfights erupted at the meeting of Congress MPs dissatisfied with Mr. Rao's leadership of India's oldest political party, witnesses said.

The free-for-all broke out after a dissident from the 73-year-old premier's home state of Andhra Pradesh accused Mr. Rao of being solely responsible for the party's losses in Gujarat and Maharashtra, two former Congress bastions.

Several Congress MPs objected to his remarks and began shouting slogans praising Mr. Rao, sparking the

melee during the gathering at the residence of dissident Congress MP, Aslam Khan, the witnesses said.

Mr. Khan, in a speech prior to the clashes, said the Congress defeats in last month's elections in Gujarat and Maharashtra had put the 109-year-old party in "a do or die situation."

"We have neither acceptability nor credibility among our countrymen," he said as the results trickling since vote-counting began Saturday, showed the Congress going down to a humiliating defeat in the two western states.

Congress governments were toppled in Gujarat and Maharashtra by Hindu revivalist parties in the state assembly elections which were seen by many analysts as a referendum on Mr. Rao's performance and his

economic reforms.

The Congress secured an unexpected majority in the eastern state of Orissa but the loss of Maharashtra, for the first time since independence, was a particularly severe blow to the party ahead of general elections next year.

Mr. Rao's leadership had already been under attack following Congress defeats in polls in two southern states in December and the latest setback was expected to increase in-fighting and calls for his ouster, at least as Congress president.

Congress spokesman Vithal Gadgil said, however, that he doubted Mr. Rao's opponents within the Congress Party, who are led by a former minister, Arjun Singh, could mount a serious challenge to the prime minister.

"The central government

will not be affected and Mr. Rao's leadership will not be seriously challenged," he said.

"The performance of the central government was not an issue in these elections," Mr. Gadgil said. "So we reject the demand for Rao's resignation and fresh (parliamentary) elections."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party), which topped the poll in Gujarat and is to form a government in Maharashtra with the Hindu militant Shiv Sena, asserted that Mr. Rao had lost his "moral authority."

The Rao government has "lost whatever remaining moral authority it had," the BJP said in a statement Monday. "The Congress is torn by dissension, ravaged by corruption and lacks a political direction or philosophy."

"For them to persist in office despite rejection by the people can only cause harm to the country," the BJP said.

With one result still to be declared, the Congress emerged as the single largest party in the 288-member Maharashtra legislature with 80 seats.

But the Shiv Sena, with 72 seats, and its election partner, the BJP, with 65 seats, were in a better position to form a government in the state ruled by the Congress since independence.

The other seats were scattered among leftist and independent parties.

In Gujarat, the BJP won 122 seats while the Congress managed just 46.

Mr. Rao's economic reforms came under renewed fire Monday following his party's poll defeats in the west coast states which have benefited most from liberalisation.



Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao is seated during a Defence Ministry investiture ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Presidential Palace, in New Delhi, India's ruling Congress (I) Party rejected opposition calls for Mr. Rao's resignation after it's disastrous defeat in crucial state elections. Mr. Rao is also president of the Congress (I) Party (AFP photo)

Former Nigerian leader Obasanjo arrested

LAGOS (R) — General Olusegun Obasanjo, the only Nigerian military ruler to have voluntarily handed over power to elected civilians, was arrested Monday, his aide said.

"General Obasanjo was picked up this morning by security men," his personal assistant Ayo Adewale told Reuters.

Gen. Obasanjo's arrest followed a coup plot the military government of General Sani Abacha said was hatched by civilians and officers.

Asked if the arrest of his boss was in connection with the uncovered plot, Mr. Adewale said: "They say the arrest is political and they have taken him to Alagbon (police centre)."

He said Gen. Obasanjo's passport was seized Sunday night by security men when he arrived home from a foreign trip that took him to Britain and Denmark. They arrested him Monday.

On Friday, chief of defence

staff Major-General Abdul Salam Abu Bakar told a news conference that "29 people had been arrested in connection with a plot to topple Gen. Abacha's government on March 1."

Gen. Abu Bakar said more arrests would be made as warranted.

Last Thursday, retired General Shehu Musa Yar'adua, Gen. Obasanjo's number two in the military government that ruled Nigeria from 1976 until it restored democracy in 1979, was arrested in Abuja.

Gen. Yar'adua is a member of a government-organised Constitutional Conference, where he championed a motion that Gen. Abacha should hand over to elected civilians by Jan. 1, 1996.

Military officials said Gen. Yar'adua's arrest was in connection with the foiled coup.

Gen. Yar'adua and Gen. Obasanjo have been formidable supporters of a quick

return to civil rule in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, which has been governed by soldiers for 25 out of its 35 years of independence.

The recent coup plot brings to nine the number of successful and failed military attempts to take power.

On Sunday, Nigerian Roman Catholic bishops ended their annual conference in Lagos and declared that the country would have been better off without military involvement in politics.

"With the benefit of hindsight it can now be said that Nigeria would have been better off if the military had never intervened in her political life," they said in a communique.

According to local press reports, several other leading Nigerians including politicians were being held over the recent coup plot.

One magazine said it expected all those involved to be shot, as has been the

practice in Nigeria after failed coups.

During the government of General Ibrahim Babangida, who plunged Nigeria into crisis when he annulled a presidential election in 1993, more than 50 people were executed for trying to overthrow the government in two separate failed coups.

The 1993 election was believed to have been won by businessman Moshood Abiola, one of Africa's richest men.

Gen. Abacha seized power several months later, in November 1993, in the chaos that erupted after the annulment.

But the problem did not die and in June 1994, Mr. Abiola proclaimed himself president. He was arrested and has since been detained pending trial for treason.

Strikes and riots which erupted last summer died down after a tough clampdown on the opposition.

Pakistani police crackdown leads to 300 arrests

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Police said Monday they have arrested almost 300 people in three days as part of a citywide crackdown against the runaway violence in Karachi.

Police have confiscated scores of weapons, including a number of AK-47 assault rifles. However, most of those detained are suspected of only petty crimes and none has been charged in any of the recent terrorist attacks that have plagued Karachi, Pakistan's business capital.

One Pakistani newspaper, said the number of arrested had reached 1,000. But police told the Associated Press that just under 300 men had been taken into custody since the operation began Saturday.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has vowed to deal with the killers in a "firm and ruthless" manner. However, critics say her government has been slow in responding to the escalating violence that has claimed about 500 lives in the past three months.

"Karachi is under attack," the Karachi Women's Peace Committee, a private group, said at the conclusion of a meeting Sunday. "Immediate measures must be taken on a war footing to control the situation... this is an SOS."

Two people were gunned down Monday, police said. A day earlier, 13 people were killed, including nine shot dead when attackers opened fire with automatic weapons at the office of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (Haqiqi) in western Karachi. Police suspect that a rival MQM faction carried out the slaughter.

Ms. Bhutto blames the fighting on rival ethnic, political, and religious groups, and claims archival India has sponsored attacks as well. She's also accused the country's drug mafia, saying they are angry that her government has agreed to extradite suspected drug traffickers to the United States.

"Terrorists want to scare away foreign investors, but my government will not be impressed and will not crush them," Ms. Bhutto said Sunday in the eastern city of Lahore.

Ms. Bhutto withdrew the army from the streets of Karachi at the end of November, saying police were capable of maintaining order in the volatile city.

Angry EU set to punish Canada over fishing war

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU), furious at Canada's seizure of a Spanish fishing boat in international waters, searched Monday for ways to punish Ottawa without triggering an all-out trade war.

Diplomats from the 15 EU countries met in Brussels for their third emergency session since a Canadian gunboat fired on and boarded the Spanish trawler Estai Thursday.

The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, has been ordered to draft a list of possible retaliatory measures against Canada. Spain responded by sending warships to the disputed Grand Banks region of the North Atlantic.

Germany's EU Ambassador Dietrich Von Kyaw, asked as he entered the meeting whether trade sanctions were likely, said: "We will see. We will try to calm things down."

The Estai was seized and its captain arrested for fishing for Greenland halibut, also known as turbot, 28 miles outside Canada's 200-mile limit. Canada says it is trying to conserve the fish by limiting catches in the region.

Officials were tight-lipped Monday about what a prospective sanctions list might contain, but they made clear they wanted Canada to release the boat.

"There's no question of negotiations on this affair if the captain and the ship are not first freed," a commission spokesman said.

Canada was holding the boat in St. John's, Newfoundland, until a court hearing Tuesday decides whether its owners can post a bond against one count of illegal fishing.

The ship's captain, Enrique Davila Gonzalez, was released Sunday on bail after being charged with four counts under Canadian law, including one count of illegal fishing.

Chechens repel Russian attack — radio

SHALI, Russia (AFP) — Chechen fighters have repelled a Russian attack near the village of Chechen Aul, southeast of the Chechen capital of Grozny, an official press spokesman announced Monday on Chechen radio.

Ten Chechen fighters were wounded and one killed during the fighting, the spokesman said as music programming was interrupted on the local station. He gave no details of Russian casualties.

Chechen Aul is on the frontline of fighting between Chechen rebels and Russian forces, which are fighting to crush Chechnya's independence from Moscow.

The spokesman, Sharpuddin Ismailov, called for residents of Shali, which Chechen separatists regard as their capital following the capture of Grozny, to bring food and medicine to the wounded in the regional hospital here.

The attack on Chechen Aul came as a heavy, late-morning snowstorm lifted from the region.

Mr. Ismailov said several Russian armoured vehicles were destroyed as Chechens drove back an advance at Chechen Aul, a village 10 kilometres southeast of Grozny and the site of a strategic, Russian-occupied crossroads.

Russian forces have been pressing southward since completing the encirclement of Grozny in February.

Long-range artillery fire could be heard from the direction of Chechen Aul and the nearby Chechen stronghold of Argun throughout Sunday night and Monday morning.

Meanwhile, Chechen security forces tightened the republic's eastern border Sunday in the wake of the bizarre murder of a charismatic field commander.

The murder has suggested there is a power struggle among the Chechen separatist leadership.

Ali Edelegiev, known simply as Ely, fit the type of the Chechen separatist commander: imposing in stature and with a thick beard, wild eyes, firm handshake and foreign car.

He was said to have hundreds of loyal followers, who form a key part of the defence force protecting the city of Gudermes, the largest holdout of supporters of separatist President Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Taiwan offers to recognise Chinese presidency

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwan Monday offered to recognise China's head of state, in an unprecedented attempt by the Chinese Nationalist island to thaw relations with the Communist-ruled mainland.

Vincent Siew, chairman of the body that formulates policy toward Beijing, told parliament that Taiwan was ready to recognise the authority of President Jiang Zemin and stage reciprocal presidential visits.

The statement was widely seen as an attempt to prompt China into recognising Taiwan so that the two claimants to China's sovereignty can step up attempts to end more than four decades of often-bitter rivalry. The offer was conditional upon Taiwanese President Lee Teng-Hui's also being acknowledged as a head of state.

Mr. Siew told parliament: "We would recommend that President Lee meet his mainland counterpart, Jiang Zemin, in Beijing if Jiang extended an invitation to Lee as head of state."

He added: "If Mr. Jiang invited our president to visit the mainland as head of state, we would use the same title

to invite him to visit here."

Mr. Siew made the declaration as he told parliament that his organisation, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), had formed a committee to cope with any crisis after the death of Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. He said Taiwan believed the condition of Mr. Deng, 90, was "critical."

"The latest information we have is that Deng is in critical condition. His health is deteriorating rapidly," he said.

Mr. Siew's proposal was also a recognition by Taiwan that, more than 55 years after the civil war, China now had two heads of state, observers said.

Since the Nationalists fled the mainland in 1949, leaders in Taipei and Beijing have each claimed to have sovereignty over all China. There have been no official ties or contacts across the Taiwan Strait ever since.

Mr. Siew said the thinking was now that a country can have two leaders. "The two sides of the Taiwan Strait are one China, two political entities, with two heads of state."

The proposal is almost certain to be rejected by Beijing, but observers said it was a

major shift by Taipei in stating its readiness to recognise the Communist state if Beijing did the same.

The nationalist Kuomintang government now realises that if it is to have any role of substance on the international stage, it must make up with China, observers said.

Taiwan has eased its hostility towards the mainland, starting in 1987 when it lifted martial law. Over the past three years, the Taipei government has also allowed various non-political exchanges with the mainland, and Taiwanese investors now play a leading role in providing the capital for China's economic recovery.

The two sides have held a series of unofficial talks, but the atmosphere remains clouded by mistrust.

Relations have also been damaged by controversy and even bloodshed, such as the murder of more than 20 Taiwanese tourists during a visit to China last year. Taipei briefly banned tour visits and threatened other sanctions.

Mr. Siew said Taiwan was not afraid of holding political talks with China. But he added that such talks cannot

be held when the mainland uses the stock answer — "one country, two systems, with China as the sovereign body."

He said talks were also impossible while China's leaders carried on threatening to take military action against Taiwan if it declared independence.

Meanwhile, a Beijing spokesman said Mr. Deng is in generally good health.

Chen Jian, chief of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Information Department, said that was the message conveyed by Prime Minister Li Peng to other leaders during this weekend's United Nations Social Summit.

"As a man at the age of 90, Deng Xiaoping is in a relatively good health condition as a whole. That is the message that is clear to all," Mr. Chen told reporters.

Earlier the Indonesian News Agency, Antara, said President Suharto had been told by Mr. Li that the health of Mr. Deng, recently reported to have been ill, was improving.

Mr. Deng has retired from all posts but is still believed to retain supreme power in China despite his advanced age.

Rebels shell Cambodian army positions

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Khmer Rouge guerrillas have stepped up their assaults on government troops occupying a former rebel base in Cambodia's remote northern Preah Vihear province, the provincial governor said Monday.

"Small Khmer Rouge groups are increasing attacks on the government troops stationed in their former base at Preah Pralay," Meas Sarin told AFP.

Phnom Penh's troops took control of the major rebel base situated near the foot of the cliff-top Preah Vihear temple which straddles the Thai-Cambodian border late last year.

The guerrillas were firing rockets and mortars at the government troops "twice or three times a day," the gov-

ernor said.

But Meas Sarin said there were several thousand government troops — backed by five tanks — defending the Preah Pralay base and trying to cut off supply lines to the rebels occupying the Preah Vihear Temple.

"We will not allow the guerrillas to recapture this base," he said.

Mr. Meas Sarin said he was not aware of any casualties from the recent guerrilla attacks.

Although no exact figures have been made available, dozens of government soldiers have been injured by guerrilla mines and booby traps in Preah Vihear.

Small groups of guerrillas were also staging hit-and-run attacks on villages and military outposts elsewhere in the

province, the governor said.

The governor said that the military's campaign against the guerrillas in the province had been successful but added that it was difficult to "totally eliminate the Khmer Rouge problem."

"The guerrillas are always moving from place to place," he said.

Meanwhile, a human rights group said Monday international financial institutions and aid donors should insist that Cambodia hold its officials and military accountable for human rights abuses.

The report by Human Rights Watch was issued on the eve of a Paris donor conference to be attended by delegates from 40 countries.

The 100-page report titled "Cambodia at War" also urged an end to any further

provision of arms or military equipment to the Cambodian government or the Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

It blamed the Khmer Rouge for slaughtering civilians, razing villages and abducting thousands of civilians for forced labour and ransom, including Westerners, and massacring ethnic Vietnamese.

The Khmer Rouge have changed little since their bloody reign from 1975 to 1979 when at least one million Cambodians — almost one-eighth of the population — died from execution, starvation, slave labour and disease, the report said.

"It is critical for the international community to send the message that accountability must apply in all areas, including human rights."

Gore: NATO expansion linked to Moscow ties

TALLINN (R) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore said Monday that NATO expansion must take place at the same time as the alliance deepens and clarifies its relations with Russia.

Mr. Gore, on a brief visit to Estonia, said: "It is important to understand that the process by which NATO expands is a process that must take at the same time the relationship between NATO and Russia is deepened and clarified."

"Both processes must take place simultaneously and both processes must take place in full open, public view with no surprises and no sudden movements. This is the correct way to proceed," he said.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin told a security summit in Budapest in December that Russia could not tolerate an eastward expansion of NATO to its borders and expressed fears that cold peace was replacing the cold war.

But NATO sources said last week in Brussels that the U.S. and Russia are to meet in Geneva in two weeks' time after Moscow dropped its all-out opposition to NATO enlargement and said it may go ahead under certain conditions.

Mr. Gore also said the three newly-independent Baltic republics were not being given lower priority

than other Eastern European countries seeking to join NATO.

"There has been absolutely no list of any kind drawn up and anyone who says that there is such a list simply does not know what he or she is talking about," Mr. Gore said in response to questions at a ceremony.

Mr. Gore was speaking to reporters after he and Estonian President Lennart Meri witnessed the signing of an agreement on the clean-up of the ex-Soviet nuclear submarine training facility at Paldiski, west of Tallinn.

Under the agreement, the U.S. has pledged to train Estonians in decontamination techniques and reactor decommissioning as well as evaluating radiological levels at the heavily-polluted base.

The agreement is a result of President Bill Clinton's commitment last year during a visit to Latvia of \$2 million in technical assistance to support the clean-up.

Mr. Meri said the document would help "end one chapter in the tragic history of Paldiski and open another chapter."

Mr. Gore held a brief meeting with Mr. Meri at the 18th century Kadriorg Palace on the outskirts of Tallinn after they arrived earlier Monday from Copenhagen, where they had attended a United Nations Social Summit.

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Justice in democracy

THE VERDICT passed by the Court of Cassation yesterday in the case of the Muta cadets accused of plotting to destabilise the Kingdom is a milestone in the annals of Jordan's legal history and a clear reaffirmation of our democratic process is alive and prospering. The ruling should be a source of pride for all Jordanians since it proves the integrity and independence of our judiciary system and those honourable people who man it. We should be all the more proud in fact since there was quite a lot of talk late last year of attempts at meddling with the judiciary, and yesterday's verdict showed beyond doubt that our legal system remains intact and independent. Needless to say, no democracy would work unless the third estate of government is fully trusted by the people as a fair and final arbiter in societal disputes. The judges that heard the Muta case sat not only as a judicial review court but as an evaluating tribunal, reviewing the proceedings of the State Security Court and reexamining the litigations of the prosecutor and the defence. And as such their verdict should in no way be interpreted as being an attempt to scoff at the ruling of the lower court. In the words of prominent jurist and former Justice Minister Taher Hikmat: "The basis is that no judgement should be passed on the judgement of a court of this nature. Its verdict is normally a headline for the truth that we all are seeking. But what can be said is that the Court of Cassation had based its judgement on available evidence, and the final verdict has come as a landmark in this country's legal history."

Some sceptics might still want to think that the higher court used the case to reassert the independence of the judicial system. Those are reminded that while judges might tend to be rigid in their application of the law, they, being the best jurors, are not only sensitive to the sentiments of the people but also the most trustworthy in guarding the higher ideals and interests of the state.

Yesterday's ruling can in no way be interpreted to mean that Jordan and Jordanians will relax their vigil against any individual or group of people who threaten the security and stability of the state. As the British prime minister, Mr. John Major, said just before his arrival in Jordan, violence and democracy cannot go together. What the ruling indicates, though, is that the rule of law in this country will be upheld, now as well as in the future.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Monday called on the U.S. to honour its moral commitments and to write off all of Jordan's debts. It said the outcome of the regional tour by Secretary of State Warren Christopher was not clear yet, but it was imperative to remind him of the old friendly relations between Jordan and the U.S.. The newspaper said Jordan was let down by the U.S. Congress when it refused to write off the full amount of Jordan's debts. It is clear that the debate on these debts in Congress did not take place in a balanced political framework "but we would like to explain that the linkage between our choice of peace and pursuit to achieve it by signing the treaty (with Israel) did not start on our side," said the newspaper. "It was the Americans themselves who linked the two issues — whether their executive or legislative officials. Here we would like to remind Mr. Christopher who is visiting us today of what President (Bill) Clinton literally said under the dome of the Jordanian parliament, the paper said, quoting Mr. Clinton as saying: "The U.S. believes that there are fruits for peace and we have taken it upon ourselves to exempt Jordan from its debts and to seek to achieve development in Jordan in the way that would enable the people of this country to enjoy the fruits of peace." The paper also reminded that Mr. Clinton has said the peace-building process in Jordan and the Middle East should make the people feel its fruits so as the anti-peace forces would not exploit the situation and ruin the process. "Here we painfully ask whether the stand (by Congress) was taken against the forces of extremism, hatred, terrorism, and poverty or against the forces of peace?" the newspaper asked. The newspaper said Jordan's debts to the U.S. are financial and can be paid back rescheduled, reduced or cancelled, while American debts to Jordan are first and foremost moral and cannot be rescheduled, postponed cancelled or reduced and cannot be under debate. It is unfortunate that the murderers are being rewarded and victims are being punished, Al Ra'i said, adding that if the U.S. paid billions of dollars to Israel in the past to enable it to finance its wars and expansionist policies, then it is Jordan's right to obtain the millions of dollars that would support its pursuit of peace and development. Therefore the linkage between peace and exempting Jordan from its debts was made by the U.S. and should be implemented by those who announced this commitment before our people and before their people and before the whole world, the newspaper concluded.

AL DUSTOUR newspaper dealt with His Majesty King Hussein's meeting with the follow-up committee of the Arab-African Conference which met in Amman. It said the King has affirmed that peace is very important for all the peoples of the region and would enable them to direct their energies and capabilities towards development and building a better future for the coming generations in an area free of mass destruction weapons. The newspaper said no doubt the Arabs and Africans have a message that should be heard by the world.

The View from Fourth Circle

The great deal of violent, frightened warriors

THE AGREEMENT last week between the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Israeli government to achieve the next stage of the Oslo accord by July 1 is probably the make-or-break litmus test of the current peace process in Palestine. It is also an extraordinarily obvious, old fashioned deal between two savvy yet staggered political pros.

Like the two power-addicted old political operatives that they are, Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin are implementing a deal that will satisfy both of their domestic political constituencies, and therefore, will maintain them in their respective leadership positions. They do this because they are frightfully aware that public opinion on the peace process in Israel and Palestine have become very sceptical, given that both people have probably suffered more than they have gained from the peace talks. Battered, frightened and reeling against the ropes, Arafat and Rabin must pull off a breakthrough if they want to avoid being thrown out of office by their respective people.

The deal they are cooking up is very logical, and I believe it has a very good chance of success. Mr. Arafat has to show his people that they will benefit from the Oslo accord, and this requires progress in two broad areas: Palestinians must achieve real political power and expanded territorial sovereignty in Palestine, and they must feel an improvement in their day-to-day lives, especially in the economic field. The Israelis, for their part, must feel that their withdrawal from Palestine does not generate further security threats to ordinary Israelis in the form of terror attacks, and that Israel is accepted by the Arab people (and not only Arab governments) as part of this region.

Therefore, not surprisingly, Israel has agreed to achieve a military redeployment and pullback by July 1st, around which time the Palestinian elections would be held. Israel will also relax some of its harsh economic controls on the Palestinians, especially the restrictions on the number of Palestinians that can work in Israel. Arafat, in return, will keep his part of the bargain by working harder to stop Palestinian attacks against Israelis.

It is noteworthy that Arafat's announcement last week that he had thwarted 10 planned attacks against Israelis was not greeted by widespread cynicism or guffaws by Palestinians or other Arabs. The reason for this, I suspect, is that most Palestinians and Arabs approve of the deal now being formulated. The Arab silent majority that gave Arafat the green light to enter into the Madrid peace talks, and then to start implementing the Oslo accord, is now resurfacing.

Because Arafat is perceived as finally securing real gains — or at least the promise of gains — for his people, his security clampdown on his opponents is not seen as particularly awkward. This is quite a change from four or five months ago, when his actions against his opponents made him appear to be a pitiful Israeli stooge. The

psychological change is enormous, and very significant for what is to come.

This has happened because Rabin and Arafat both have to watch their flanks, for every time they stumble their opponents gain strength. The Likud in Israel and the Islamist/leftist opposition in Palestine both represent minority positions in the marketplace of public opinion; their natural constituency of around 10-15 per cent grows much bigger only when Rabin and Arafat stumble. The Likud/Israeli oppositions cannot achieve incumbency on the strength of their own ideological positions, because the reasonable majority on both sides does not accept those ideas. They harass, they pick up protest votes, and they provide a vehicle to express frustration with the policies of Rabin and Arafat, but they are unable to do much more than this.

Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin have learned in the last 15 months that the only way they can achieve the promise of Oslo — which a clear majority of both their peoples supported and still supports — is to implement the particulars of Oslo. This is the aim of the great deal that is now being implemented.

Arafat will show his people that they are making significant political gains around or soon after July 1, and that their economic condition is improving due to three simultaneous dynamics, namely a) more Palestinians working in Israel, b) more foreign aid that will be injected into the Palestinian economy, and c) more gains from implementation of the bilateral trade deals that will soon link Israel, Palestine, and Jordan in a budding and more or less single market. With these important advances to show his people, Mr. Arafat can then muster further political muscle to clamp down on the Hamas-led Islamists, which will further encourage Israelis to keep withdrawing.

Hamas and the rest of the Palestinian opposition, for their part, will then have to decide if they will join the elections. I believe they will, because: a) they are, for the most part, smart and realistic politicians who recognise that they represent minority forces in Palestine, and that they can share political and economic power only if they play by the rules that the majority has agreed upon; b) Arafat will, in the time-honoured local Semitic tradition, buy them out, by offering them executive posts in the Palestinian government; and, c) they know that they cannot stand up to a strengthened Arafat who has the support and active cooperation of Israel, Jordan, major Western powers and others in our region, all of whom will not hesitate to strike hard at Hamas if the majority of Palestinians feels it is benefiting from the political and economic implementation of the Oslo accord.

These trends should see Israel redeploy and withdraw from more Palestinian areas this summer, and the PNA-led Palestinians enjoy heightened political authority and credi-

bility. Just as this will bolster the Palestinian silent majority and simultaneously marginalise and then co-opt the Palestinian opposition, so will it also achieve the same thing on the Israeli side. It will strengthen Mr. Rabin's centrist constituency, while isolating the Israeli rightists who support unlimited settlements. Herein lies a big unknown element: The settlements.

I suspect that if Mr. Rabin succeeds in redeploying/withdrawing from most of the West Bank and Gaza, and Arafat succeeds in controlling anti-Israeli terror, Mr. Rabin will then be in a political position to carry out the next important part of this historic deal: He will muster sufficient political will and power within Israel, and world Jewry, to clamp down on the settlers, in the same manner that Arafat is clamping down on his Islamists.

Rabin knows that Israeli public opinion is united and strong on the issue of security and terror, that it is almost as strong on the issue of Jerusalem, and that it is very thin on the issue of the settlements. He knows that if the first stages of the Oslo accord are implemented well, and Israelis and Palestinians achieve mutually satisfying political separation without much bloodshed, then the majority of Israelis would not oppose giving up the settlements outside the Jerusalem area. For the vast majority of reasonable and rational Israelis, the prospect of genuine peace, security, coexistence and cooperation with their Arab neighbours is far more important than the antics of a small number of fringe Israelis.

At that moment, Mr. Rabin the soldier, will have to fight his last battle — leading the Israeli political centre against the lunatic Jewish settlers. He will have to lead Israelis through their own civil war, just as the Arab side to this conflict has experienced a series of small civil wars in the last three decades, amongst various combinations of Palestinians, Lebanese, Jordanians, Syrians, Iraqis and Egyptians. This internal Israeli battle cannot be fought today. It can only be fought as the second stage of the current war for peace, after the first stage has been completed later this year, if the deal goes according to plan.

I suspect, and hope, that their civil war will be brief, and more political than military. It is virtually certain that the Israeli majority will ultimately win in the same way that Mr. Arafat will probably triumph — a) by mobilising the majority and brutally asserting its will against the minority (i.e. a Semitic Thatcherism) and b) by buying out the opposition, literally (by offering financial incentives for the repatriation of Jewish settlers) and figuratively (by giving the lunatic rightists executive posts and other government favours, which is an established modern political tradition in Israel).

Did anyone really think that Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat — frightened and violent political warriors that they are — would just sit around and watch their entire life's work waste away?

LETTERS

Traffic on the roads — carnage goes on

To the Editor:

THE EVENING news on Sunday served up what has become a familiar scene: vicious wreck, mangled mini-bus, a truck usually involved, corpses, ripped and broken bodies. We can predict the reason for the accident without reading about it or listening: speeding, overtaking on turns, recklessness.

It appears to me that the authorities are either not serious about putting a stop to this madness, or they really cannot see the facts before their faces. While there has been much talk about new enforcement of basic rules of the road, it appears that the authorities still do not have a concept of what reckless driving is. It is routine in most Western countries for a patrol car to come up behind a reckless driver, pull him over and give him a citation. I have been in this country for 21 years and have never seen this done. On the contrary, I have witnessed incredible things on the road, a policeman witnessing the same things, and doing nothing. It is still quite routine for drivers (usually taxis and services) to weave in and out, for anybody to make a U-turn wherever he wants — no matter if it is a major road or if he blocks off traffic.

I am still waiting to see the traffic authorities out in traffic doing something rather than simply shouting at people to keep moving. If anyone followed any mini-bus in Jordan for five minutes, he would see at least 10 violations — for sure recklessness and speeding. Because the traffic authorities do not get out into traffic and watch for these things, an attitude of carelessness and arrogance is bred into these drivers from the beginning. Who can blame them? If the authorities don't seem to care, why should the people?

In spite of all the talk about redeploying traffic authorities to the places where the real problems are, I have yet to see much of this. When I drive from my home on Jabal Hussein and turn onto Abdali, I can expect to be stopped at least twice a week by the traffic authorities who seem to have been rooted in the same place for about five years now. Yesterday there were five policemen doing the all so critical job of checking drivers' licences. But the moment of truth, for me, is when I cross over Jabal Luweibdeh and approach a major service route at the top of the hill. The stop signs, presumably, give me the right of way, but I would have been in a coffin years ago if I thought that anyone cared about the stop signs, including the police. I have never seen a policeman patrolling it. My conclusion, like most of the frustrated motorists in the Kingdom, is that if the police don't care about stop signs, why should I? Tear down the stop signs if they mean nothing, and let the law of the jungle prevail. I would love to see, just once in my life, some of these policemen deployed, for instance, to some of the back streets, to some of the girls' schools, where shabab routinely roar around in their fathers' big Mercedes and BMWs causing havoc on the streets. Unfortunately, nobody is ever arrested until they cause an accident or run over a child. (I personally would not issue a driver's license to any shab under the age of 30). Do the authorities really want to help stop the carnage that goes on on our roads? I suggest that they get out on the streets (on the ground) and do something. Until that happens, the general attitude towards "rules" of driving will be carelessness and disdain.

Bob Robertson,
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Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



M. KAHIL

Karachi disorder challenges Pakistan's democracy

By Alistair Lyon
Reuter

ISLAMABAD — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, eager to improve U.S. ties and woo foreign investors, must curb ethnic and sectarian disorder before it overwhirls Pakistan's fragile democracy, diplomats and analysts say.

The killing of two Americans in Karachi last week has highlighted the urgency of the task facing Ms. Bhutto, who was in Singapore at the time, giving ammunition to critics who accuse her of spending too much time on foreign junkets.

"Surely the people of Rome were not averse in principle to their emperor fiddling, any more than Pakistanis are averse to their prime minister visiting foreign capitals. It is their sense of timing that bothers them," wrote a Pakistani columnist.

Since taking power in October 1993, Ms. Bhutto has further opened Pakistan to foreign investment, launched an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-inspired economic reform programme and declared her commitment to fighting social ills and promoting democratic values.

But reality has not fully matched the rhetoric.

The persuasive, Oxford-

educated prime minister has impressed foreign audiences and her government's incentives have brought promises of foreign investment worth billions of dollars.

One of her priorities has been to revive Pakistan's relationship with the United States, a close military ally until 1990, when, with the cold war over, Washington cut off aid in an attempt to force Pakistan to give up its nuclear option.

Ms. Bhutto very much wants her visit to Washington next month to showcase a new warmth in economic and political ties.

Her government enacted sweeping anti-narcotics legislation in January. That proved enough for U.S. President Bill Clinton to rule that it was in U.S. interests not to apply to Pakistan sanctions aimed at nations that fail to fight drugs.

In February, she extradited to the United States a bomb plot suspect Ramzi Ahmad Yousef after his capture in Islamabad.

Last week senior U.S. officials told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the ban on American aid had failed to check nuclear proliferation and complicated ties with Pakistan.

But Ms. Bhutto's effort to cast Pakistan as a liberal,

tolerant Muslim nation was jolted by the case of two Christians sentenced to hang for blasphemy against Islam but later acquitted by an appeals court.

And Wednesday's ambush in which two Americans died, threw up more unwelcome publicity, this time on the violence wracking Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city and commercial hub.

Ms. Bhutto responded on Saturday by declaring that security for diplomats and foreigners was being tightened. She promised to quell violence she blamed on foreign agents and drug barons as well as ethnic and sectarian militants.

"We feel the battle we are fighting is for Pakistan's stability, regional and indeed global stability," she said.

The people of Karachi and foreign investors are hoping the government will finally shake off the lethargy that has seemed to afflict it in tackling the port city's plight.

"It's a wake-up call for Benazir," one London-based investor said of the attack on the Americans. "She sees what she stands to lose in terms of foreign investment and ties with U.S."

Yet revelations that policemen in a vehicle mounted with a machine-

gun witnessed the assassins' escape but failed to chase them for fear of being killed show the enormity of the task.

"There must be a qualitative change in policing Karachi to shore up domestic and foreign confidence and stop the stock market from going into free fall," a Western diplomat said.

Ms. Bhutto's options are limited.

For political reasons, she is finding it hard to reach an accommodation with Altaf Hussain, self-exiled leader of the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM), which is well-armed and has popular support among the city's Mohajir majority.

The Mohajirs, descended from Indian Muslims who fled to Pakistan at partition in 1947, complain of oppression at the hands of the state and the politically powerful rural landlords of Sindh province — who include Ms. Bhutto's family.

More force may not solve the problem.

The army ended a 29-month deployment in Karachi on Nov. 30 without quelling violence which cost 800 lives last year. More than 320 people have been killed in the city this year.

"Sending the troops back in would just be repeating a failed strategy," the Western diplomat said.

A life dedicated to helping children of the world

James P. Grant, the late executive director of UNICEF, who passed away Jan. 28, is remembered here in an obituary by UNICEF's Regional Director of the Middle East and North Africa, Sarojini Vittachi.

"THIS IS the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and, as long as I live, it is my privilege to do whatever I can. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of a splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

It was a few months before his death that James P. Grant affirmed his way of life, by quoting George Bernard Shaw (above) in the 1995 State of the World's Children Report. Today, as we look back at the life of Mr. Grant, who passed away after a decade and a half of unparalleled service in the cause of world's children, it is very obvious that the man actually not only lived by this noble philosophy but also motivated others by it.

For the Middle East and other parts of the Arab World, Mr. Grant symbolises an era that witnessed revolutionary changes in the way the region's people and governments saw their children, treated them and looked after them. Decades-old barriers were broken down and issues once deemed too personal for discussion in public were brought into focus and debated at length to produce viable solutions which are low cost and of optimum effect.

It will be no exaggeration to assert that millions of children born in the last 15 years in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) — as indeed elsewhere in the world — would not have lived to see their fifth birthday had it not been for the decisive leadership of Mr. Grant, who left no stone unturned in his quest to serve the world's future generations.

While the battle for child health is far from won, it can be safely said that the last decade in particular has been revolutionary in the region in terms of universal child immunisation, oral rehydration therapy, the distribution of vitamin A, the scientific acknowledgement of the value of mother's milk, the achievements towards basic education for both boys and girls.

Regarding immunisation as a case in point. In MENA countries, the number of polio cases decreased by 79 per cent from 1981 to 1991. By 1993, 11 of the region's countries reported no cases of polio, among them Kuwait and Morocco, which have had no reported cases since 1990. MENA countries have also witnessed overwhelming success in immunisation against measles. In 1981, the region reported more than 400,000 cases of measles. By 1991, thanks largely to Universal Child Immunisation campaigns, initiated by Mr. Grant in the early 80s, fewer than 100,000 cases were re-

A MAN WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE: In the words of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, very few men and women ever have the opportunity to do as much good as James Grant (right). He will be remembered as one of the greatest international public servants of his generation (UNICEF photo)



ported in the region.

It was a revolutionary approach in strategy and concept. UNICEF and many other international organisations saw the immense goodwill and results that high-level political intervention creates for humanitarian causes when Mr. Grant broke through the barriers and went to the very top, demanding action for children, asking that children receive a first call on limited resources.

Nothing was impossible or unthinkable for Mr. Grant, whether showing a sachet of salt and glucose mixture to treat diarrhoea at state dinners or pulling out statistics of child deaths from preventable diseases to prove a point. He convinced his audience of the logic and the need for concerted high-level political action to safeguard children. More often than not, Mr. Grant's approach was successful, since heads of state and governments appreciated his message and acted.

But that was not all. Mr. Grant broke the psychological barrier in the people who worked with him and motivated them. He gave them confidence to knock at the doors of the highest levels of government and heads of state without hesitation. Today UNICEF

enjoys direct contact with ministers, and those above, where the message is clearly heard and understood rather than getting lost in the corridors of bureaucracy.

For the sceptics, Mr. Grant had his favourite quote from Henry David Thoreau: "If you built castles in the air, you need not be lost. That is where it should be. Now put the foundations under them."

Indeed, it was in the Arab World that Mr. Grant had put those foundations and launched many of his innovative ideas in the service of the world's children. For instance, until recent years, the hands of the international community had been tied when it came to assisting victims of war trapped within their own countries. In 1989, the international community was empowered for the first time by a U.N. sponsored agreement of two warring Sudanese parties to suspend hostilities to allow for humanitarian intervention to aid hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons in the country. Operation Lifeline Sudan is an on-going programme that Mr. Grant personally set up and led in his capacity as the U.N. secretary general's special repre-

sentative. Similar agreements have also been negotiated with warring factions in Angola and Ethiopia. These ideas have become highly respected norms and accepted means to reach women and children in need in all parts of the globe. The concepts of "children as zones of peace" and "corridors of tranquillity" are helping mothers and children caught in crossfire in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia and other parts of the world.

Seen against that background, it was no wonder that the world saw Mr. Grant braving the highly volatile skies above the borders between Iran and Iraq soon after the guns stood silent at the end of 1980-88 Gulf war. In both Baghdad and Tehran, he successfully made a personal appeal to the leaders of both sides to abide by the ceasefire so that the children and women caught in the conflict could get the much needed help.

It was the same philosophy, although applied at a different level, that saw Lebanon's ruthless militiamen stop shooting and put down their guns for a few "days of tranquillity." They carried babies to the nearest vaccination clinics

for "shots of a different kind" at a time the 1974-1990 civil war had cost Lebanon all semblance of civilisation except modern technology to kill.

The world of child care and development saw history being made again in 1990 when 159 countries, 71 of them represented by heads of state or prime ministers, gathered in New York for the first World Summit for Children. Participants in the summit undertook to adopt national policies to ensure child health and survival. Most Arab countries were represented at the summit, with Her Majesty Queen Noor representing Jordan. Arab countries have or are in the process of translating the promise they made to their children in New York into reality.

The importance that Mr. Grant attached to the Middle East and North Africa was evident in that despite failing health, he made it a point to attend most high-level meetings in the Arab World and Africa. In 1994, he spent nearly four weeks in various countries, attending an Organisation of African Unity summit and the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, apart from a visit to Turkey to

speed up ratification of the Convention, and a visit to Morocco.

While consolidating UNICEF's traditional partnership with governments, Mr. Grant sought and established strong relationships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and brought about increased interaction in social programmes with the involvement of community leaders. Such an approach was highly significant in the Arab World, where tight-knit communities constitute the pillars of the society.

The "society-wide" alliance that UNICEF adopted as a key approach to sustaining its programmes with governments and communities was initiated by Mr. Grant. The classical approach employed not only the conventional health services, but teachers, religious leaders, mass media, voluntary organisations as well as business and labour movements. Most importantly, government agencies — the mainstay of child health services — were energised together with the mobilisation of national resources on the scale required to bring about the progress we witness in the region today. There is a clear awareness

that there has to be a priority in government programmes to effectively employ local resources to ensure child care and survival rather than falling back on international aid or organisations like UNICEF to provide the resources.

When the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated in 1980 that four million children died annually from dehydration caused by diarrhoea, UNICEF pushed the issue of Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) to the forefront of its agenda. The focus on the campaign was so intense that Mr. Grant dramatically would produce a sachet of ORT salt from his pocket while meeting heads of states and emphasising that the small packet represented life or death for a child. Today, UNICEF estimates that the number of diarrhoea deaths has been cut in half by the success of the ORT initiative, which, with the encouragement of UNICEF and WHO, convinced the leaders of most developing countries to set the goal of 82 per cent ORT use by the end of 1995.

Coupled with universal immunisation and ORT use, the under 5 mortality rate in the whole of MENA dropped by nearly half in

the last decade. By the end of 1990, UNICEF and WHO certified to the United Nations secretary general that fully 80 per cent of the world's children under one year of age had been immunised against the six biggest child-killing and crippling diseases.

In a 1994 address to the Task Force for Child Survival and Development, Mr. Grant pointed out that today, "largely as a consequence of efforts towards worldwide immunisation, many traditional enemies of children are on the run: measles, tetanus, dehydration from diarrhoea and polio. More than 4 million children didn't die last year who were dying early in the 1980s from these causes. And polio, then half a million cases a year, is now down to close to a hundred thousand, and three million children are running around today without paralysis." These impressive results vindicated Mr. Grant's firm argument for the survival and development of children through low-cost interventions as essential built-in elements of government programmes.

Another key strategy that Mr. Grant pursued was primary education for Arab girls. He had often emphasised his approach by arguing that girls with basic education make better mothers capable of giving proper care to their children.

In the early 1980s, Mr. Grant issued a call for "economic adjustment with a human face." He urged the protection of the poor and vulnerable as an objective of economic development; the investment in the poor and the restructuring of the social sectors as part and parcel of economic adjustment programmes; and the monitoring of human indicators alongside economic indicators.

Today, as a result of the UNICEF approach, commercial banks are willing to sell off, at a discount, Third World loans that often have little chance of being repaid. In instances where discounts are large, UNICEF has found that some banks are willing to forego any payment provided that the funds are in turn channelled into a development project in the debtor country.

Indeed, the achievements of the former executive director of UNICEF for the poor stand out. The selfless, untiring man with a perpetual smile that belied the seriousness of his dedication could not have been described better than in the words of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali:

"Very few men and women ever have the opportunity to do as much good as James Grant. He will be remembered as a most distinguished servant of the United Nations and as one of the greatest international public servants of his generation."

King, Christopher hold talks

(Continued from page 1)

The King said his talks with the U.S. over modernising the army are "very very serious," pointing out that Jordan needs to upgrade its Armed Forces in order to be able to "defend Jordan, defend democracy, and defend everything Jordan stands for: pluralism, human rights, and I am very much hoping that we will have the opportunity to discuss all these problems in great detail in the near future and come up with some definite answers."

Responding to a question, King Hussein said he did not expect any objections from Syria to the building of dams on the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers to satisfy the country's increasing need of water. "This is something that we will have to resolve bilaterally, hopefully collectively in the future in terms of (regaining) more of our rights," he said.

Nor did the King expect the Palestinians to have any objections to these projects, saying that the Jordan-Israel agreement did not infringe on their rights.

The King said he hoped that the dams will be constructed with the help of friendly countries and that passage of water from Israel to Jordan will be implemented on the agreed upon dates.

The U.S. secretary of state reported a growing support

for the establishment of a Middle East regional development bank saying he was looking forward for an important step towards the setting up of that bank during the Amman economic summit which will be held in October.

Mr. Christopher said that many of the questions about the bank were dealt with during a meeting of the task force in Washington, saying that another meeting for this force will be held in Amman on April 1-2.

"I see growing support for the bank... and even European countries that have doubts are beginning to have stronger belief in the validity of such a bank," Mr. Christopher said.

Mr. Christopher said that there might be some differences among the Gulf countries on the proposal for setting up the bank but he said he has urged them to support it and there will ultimately be strong support for the proposal.

Mr. Christopher said the holding of the economic conference in Amman is a "reflection of Jordan's leadership," hoping the summit would be an opportunity to show economic and business support for the Kingdom.

"reflection of the closeness of our partnership that serves so well the cause of peace and prosperity here in the Middle East."

Mr. Christopher said his talks with King Hussein and other Jordanian officials dealt with other tracks of the peace process and the steps that have been taken during his current tour to accelerate the process. He said the King and he agreed that all efforts should be made to sustain the momentum that exists in the area for the achievement of comprehensive peace.

Mr. Christopher said that Jordan not only signed a peace treaty with Israel but also made very strong steps to implement it and achieve warm peace.

"The relationship between (Israeli) Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Rabin and the King of Jordan are a model for how to implement a peace treaty, to make sure it becomes a warm peace not just in words but in action as well," said Mr. Christopher.

Responding to a question on security arrangements in the Golan Heights, Mr. Christopher said the security issue is one of the most difficult questions to resolve and which has to be addressed directly and effectively.

He said the U.S. tried to play a role in examining the options available but stressed that it was up for the two parties to agree on a solution. While in Syria, Mr. Christ-

opher indicated that some progress had been achieved in trying to end the deadlock Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Christopher said he will have further discussions on the issue with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Mr. Rabin before he leaves the region but added that "it is their security... We try to help them achieve a satisfactory outcome... help them get together on what will inevitably be one of the most difficult issues of the peace process between them."

The King said he will meet with President Assad when the opportunity arises and whenever there is a need for the meeting, describing President Assad as a "brother head of state."

Mr. Christopher said that the Gulf Cooperation Council countries made a very strong endorsement of the peace process in the statement they issued after their conference in Saudi Arabia, adding these countries understand the importance of the peace process and had a commitment to be supportive of it.

"I found very interesting the fact that the chairman of that conference, the prime minister of Bahrain, indicated that there is a strong thrust toward normalisation (of ties with Israel) and there will be no going back on normalisation in GCC countries. So it is very positive," said Mr. Christopher, whose current trip to the region

included Egypt, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

On the sanctions on Iraq, Mr. Christopher said that his talks in Jordan covered "the risks that Iraq continues to present to the world community" but did not address the sanctions or the issue of oil.

His Majesty said the "Iraqi problem which we did not discuss today is a problem that concerns all of us in terms of the human dimension to it."

Responding to a question on the flow of Iraqi oil to Jordan, the King said that Iraq owes Jordan a lot of money and Iraqi oil is exported to the Kingdom in repayment of that debt. He said the inspection regime by Lloyds register in Ababa is in place and has been functioning extremely well.

"Iraq is as close to us as Mexico is to the United States. So in the context of peace, eventually I certainly hope that and pray that this problem can be resolved and that Iraq can regain its position in terms of its people among nations that are free and democratic," the King said.

He said he hoped "Iraq can play its role in shaping the future of this region within the context of peace and the context of its rights as a country and as a people."

Mr. Christopher will visit Syria and Israel again before leaving the region.

Court overturns verdict

(Continued from page 1)

read the verdict, an eyewitness said, the eight present defendants burst into tears as they embraced their lawyer and members of their families.

"Long live justice, long live His Majesty," chanted people at the court, which issued its ruling after two sessions.

Nawaf Shdeifat, a family member of one of the defendants, said after the verdict was read that "we always protested the innocence of our sons."

"If His Majesty goes to any village of the Bani Hassan or the Bani Sakher, prominent Jordanian tribes from which most of the defendants hailed, our women would

protect him before our men do. We will protect him against any harm," Mr. Shdeifat said, stressing the loyalty of his people to the King.

Mr. Armouti told the Jordan Times that the "just and brave decision of the court is a proof of the honesty of the Jordanian judiciary."

"The verdict is a source of pride for all of us. We will show off this decision in front of the world," said Mr. Armouti.

But Mr. Armouti, one of seven lawyers who represented the accused men, demanded that the State Security Court be abolished and its jurisdiction added to that of civilian courts.

The State Security Court consists of military judges

and handles cases that pertain to national security.

Mr. Armouti described the verdict as a precedent in dealing with cases of "such political significance" adding that he never had any doubts that the Court of Cassation will clear the defendants because the evidence against them was not enough to incriminate them in the charges levelled against them.

Conviction of charges to assassinate the King carries the death sentence, but six of the defendants had their sentences commuted to various periods of imprisonment.

Mr. Armouti noted that it was the first time the Court of Cassation allowed the defence to present its case while reviewing the verdict of the State Security Court. In the past, he said, the court would only study the case as tried by the State Security Court.

worth \$3.3 million to the Kingdom, the ambassador said. He will also announce British scholarships for Jordanian diplomats as well as students in music.

Britain and Jordan have maintained traditionally close relations dating back to the founding of Jordan as an emirate in the 1920s.

King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan are regular visitors to Britain and often meet with senior British government leaders at short notice.

The British government wrote off \$75 million of Jordan's official debts last year.

Major arrives in Amman

(Continued from page 1)

The British government as well as businessmen in general have taken a close interest in establishing ties with Jordan in the wake of the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in October.

At least one group, British Middle East Interest Group, has also opened a regional office in Amman. The office, which will provide data and base information to both Jordanian and British businessmen, will cover not only the Kingdom but also the Palestinian territories,

Syria and Iraq.

Several British consultancy firms are involved in studies on various sectors of the Jordanian economy and resources, primarily water, as well as on the Kingdom's privatisation drive.

One of the major projects where a British company is involved is a study of Disi underwater reservoir at a cost of £4.5 million, provided as grant by the London government.

While in Jordan Mr. Major will also announce the donation of British equipment

Iran parliament approves budget, demands savings

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's parliament Sunday approved the budget for the new Iranian year starting on March 21 and took measures to curb government spending.

The nominally balanced budget of 96.1 trillion riyals (\$54.9 billion at the official exchange rate), up from this year's 69.8 trillion, includes stipulations that aim to limit expenditure and increase parliament's say in how the budget is spent.

It will become law after it is ratified by the Guardian Council, a 12-man body of Islamic clerics and lawyers.

Oil revenue, based on \$15 per barrel of crude, is projected at \$13.5 billion. The current year's budget, drawn up at a time of depressed oil prices, envisaged \$10.15 billion of oil revenue.

The bill maintains the general shape of the budget in recent years: Oil exports form the bulk of state income, current expenditures outstrip capital outlays and some 60 per cent of the total budget to state industries and banks widely seen as inefficient enterprises.

But it breaks with past practice by banning the

founding of new state firms and requiring the existing ones to open their books for the parliament.

The budget bill also takes the unprecedented step to stipulate that the oil ministry's foreign exchange allocation of \$1.1 billion be paid by equal monthly instalments, as a measure of increased control over its spending.

The government's planning chief, Massoud Raghani Zanjani, warned that the move was tying the hands of state officials.

"In a country that is surrounded by fire and crisis...there is need for flexibility...this plan ties that hands," he said.

But parliament went on to pass a ban on buying cars and chartering planes by state agencies and firms, among other savings.

The budget also includes measures aimed at reducing hard cash expenditures, such as banning government and state-run firms from any imports if local equivalents are available.

The budget bill also requires the government to reduce Iran's foreign debt by \$1.6 billion within the year.

GATT deal to boost Arab Gulf oil, petrochemical sales

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The landmark GATT free trade deal will open new markets for Gulf petrochemicals and boost their oil exports although crude is not covered in the accord, according to local trade officials.

The deal by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, signed by more than 120 countries in Morocco last year, is also expected to prompt the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members to hasten plans to create a common market in line with their 1983 economic agreement, they said.

The GATT deal, which created the World Trade Organisation, covered most commodities and services while it excluded crude oil as this could result in dumping markets and such a wealth is concentrated in a few countries.

"But it will indirectly affect GCC oil exports because opening up of the world market will lead to an economic growth, which in turn will lead to an increase in demand for crude and its products," said Aoun Al Junaibi, head of the economic department at the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The agreement will also create large scope for Gulf petrochemical exports, which

reached around three billion dirhams (\$817 million) in 1993," he told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Al-Shuruf weekly magazine in an interview.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — currently produce around 13 million barrels per day (b/d) and they have the capacity to raise output to nearly 15 million b/d.

The six members also account for most of the Arab petrochemical output of around 14 million tonnes per year. They have sought to expand production but were discouraged by high customs tariffs imposed on their petrochemical and aluminium exports by the European Union, their main economic partner.

The GATT accord stipulates the EU slashes such tariffs to around six per cent from between 13 and 15 per cent while similar reductions would be made in Japan, the United States and other industrial countries.

"The GATT agreement will prompt the GCC to accelerate plans for a common market and reach a free trade pact with the EU and other world economic groupings," said Abdul Rahman Al Muta'awi.

Rich, poor states discuss corruption crackdown

PARIS (R) — Rich and poor nations met in Paris Monday to discuss a crackdown on a global scourge of official corruption, including rules allowing businesses to bribe government employees abroad.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) opened two days of talks with officials from two dozen non-member countries, including Albania, Namibia, Mongolia and Argentina, to try to work out a common strategy against sleaze.

OECD officials reckon billions of dollars a year are swallowed by bribes handed to officials, adding to economic inefficiency, raising costs and discouraging investment and aid.

It also poses a broader threat to democracies and governments. Corrupt practices "undermine political legitimacy by sapping confidence in government institutions," OECD Secretary-General Jean-Claude Paye said in a speech.

The symposium would look at remedying causes of corruption including absence of regulation, low salaries for civil servants, and a lack of a sense of public accountability. It would not come up with any binding recommendations.

Former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias, the winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize, urged the Paris-based OECD, grouping 25 rich nations, to tighten laws that let some Western nations ignore

the anti-bribery laws of developing countries.

"In some cases, they have even allowed their corporations to make the payment of bribes tax-deductible in order to boost their foreign sales," he said.

"I challenge you to establish or strengthen penalties for your companies that bribe abroad and for government officials who siphon off public funds," he said.

Almost all countries have laws against bribery of their own officials but most do not impose legal sanctions against bribery of foreign officials.

"This initiative might act as a catalyst for global action and help companies refuse to engage in such practices in host countries," the OECD

said in a statement.

Officials said that, among efforts to outlaw corruption in developing nations, Ecuador had started obliging foreign investors to sign an anti-corruption pact.

Mark Pieth, the Swiss chairman of the OECD working group on illicit payments, said that he did not believe corruption was necessarily on the rise, simply that it was more widely discussed. "I think it's a question of awareness," he said.

The meeting is a follow-up to a 1994 agreement within the OECD on guidelines to stamp out on bribery and corruption of government officials that urged the OECD to cooperate with other nations.

Sterling on the ropes; more falls feared

LONDON (R) — The value of sterling continued to fall Monday as the German mark staged another upturn, but the significant factor this time has been the pound's failure to gain ground on the weaker dollar, analysts said Monday.

The pound dipped to a new low of 2.2155 marks in Tokyo — compared with its previous record low on March 8 of 2.2205 — as the stronger mark pressured everything including the dollar.

The pound was only just holding its own on the U.S. currency at \$1.5815, basically

unchanged from Friday's close.

Up until now the pound's dive against the soaring mark has been offset to a large extent by its upturn against the weaker dollar, but this is no longer the case.

"Last week we could to some extent excuse sterling weakness because it was mark driven," said David Coleman, treasury adviser at CIBC Wood Gundy. "But the situation has changed dramatically since then and it is the weakness of cable (sterling's value against the

dollar) that is the worry now."

The Bank of England closely watches the pound's trade weighted index, which measures the pound's value against a basket of currencies, as a measure of its strength or weakness. Any fall sets alarm bells ringing at the central bank.

While the pound has a long way to go before it gets anywhere near its all time low of \$1.0300 set in February 1985, it is setting dangerously close to its all time low of 84.0 on the trade weighted index. The index was down at 84.9 Monday.

Analysts said the market is becoming more uncertain about sterling. Investors are looking more at bearish factors, like weak economic data and the uncertain political backdrop.

A smaller than expected rise in factory gate prices in February and last week's fall

in manufacturing output helped reinforce the idea that the British economy is slowing down and that interest rates will not have to be raised again.

"The trade weighted index is in dangerous territory and its fall has wiped out the recent tightening of interest rates," said Ian Amstutz, British economist at Bankers Trust.

Britain is in the dilemma of not being able to raise rates to defend sterling without jeopardising the economy.

John Major is also the most unpopular prime minister since records began and there is therefore little political will to increase rates again.

This raises the prospect of an ugly row between the Bank of England, which is usually keen to raise rates if this is necessary, and the politically motivated treasury over future moves in interest rates, analysts said.

Hungary devalues forint, will cut social expenditure

BUDAPEST (R) — Hungary's new team of economic leaders announced a series of sweeping economic changes Sunday designed to reduce the country's spiralling debts.

In moves they admitted will be painful for Hungarians, they devalued the country's forint by nine per cent as of Monday and said they would begin to dismantle the costly systems of cradle-to-grave social assistance inherited from communism.

"Given the poor state of government finances, we can no longer afford the generous payments, especially to the people who are relatively well-off," Finance Minister Lajos Bokros told reporters at a news conference.

Mr. Bokros, who together with central bank chief Gyorgy Suranyi and Privatisation Minister Tamas Suchman took office last Thursday, has pledged to improve Hungary's gaping deficits in the central budget and in the current account — the broad measure of foreign trade and

international payments.

The shortfalls are eight and nine per cent of the gross domestic product respectively.

On Sunday, Mr. Bokros said that from July 1 the government would only pay family allowance, a payment awarded to parents, to the poorest Hungarians. Currently everyone is eligible.

Hungary will also introduce general tuition fees at state-owned universities for the first time from September. Mr. Bokros said a system of public aid will be introduced to help those who cannot afford to pay.

In addition, public bureaucracy and university staff numbers will be reduced to save the state money, Mr. Bokros said.

"We believe that the combined effect of these moves will already have a positive effect on the 1995 (central) budget, and even more later on," he said.

He said the changes would also help social justice, as

"they will allow the government to concentrate its help on those truly in need."

Mr. Bokros, who was flanked at the news conference by Mr. Suranyi and Prime Minister Gyula Horn, also announced measures aimed at boosting exports and limiting imports.

He said the forint devaluation, which is measured against the central bank's currency basket of 70 per cent ECUs and 30 per cent dollars, will make Hungarian exports more competitive in the West.

He also announced that from March 20 the government will institute a new eight per cent customs duty on all imports, except energy sources and capital equipment.

The government has also introduced a series of steps to make the forint convertible. Businesses will for the first time be able to keep all foreign currency earned from exports rather than exchanging it all for forints.

"(The move) will restore confidence in the forint and make business cheaper by eliminating the costs of exchanging money back and forth," Mr. Suranyi said.

China seeks relief from Japan over galloping yen

BEIJING (R) — China has indicated it would seek debt relief from Japan, saying the surging yen had transformed helpful Japanese concessional credits into painful burdens that continue to grow.

Foreign Trade Vice-Minister Lin Shanzai told reporters that the dollar equivalent of three tranches of Japanese yen credits.

Mr. Liu said the yen surge was also affecting China's foreign trade but that the impact was less pronounced.

While China's partially convertible renminbi yuan edged stronger against the dollar in January and February, it fell about seven per cent against the yen and the mark, he said.

Because 80 per cent of China's foreign trade is denominated in U.S. dollars, he said, "the depreciation of the dollar will definitely have an impact on China's trade."

"We are now studying how to prevent and minimise the impact of the sharp devaluation of the dollar against the yen," Mr. Liu told a news conference held by Wu Yi, head of the ministry of foreign trade and economic cooperation.

China's foreign trade in 1994 totalled \$236.7 billion, up 20.9 per cent over 1993, with a \$5.3 billion surplus.

"Japanese yen loans are development assistance provided by the Japanese government to other countries," he said. "The appreciation of the yen has resulted in added burdens for the recipient countries that are not in line with the policy and objectives of Japanese yen credits."

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A Bank of China economist was quoted as saying the dollar's sharp fall will not hurt China's ability to repay its foreign debt because it has diversified its borrowing and reduced its dependence on the yen.

"China is mature enough to handle such foreign exchange fluctuations," Tao Liming, an economist at China's main trade finance bank, was quoted as telling the China Daily.

To avoid rate risk, China has traded currency futures and done spot trading of foreign exchange and currency options, Mr. Tao said. Individual firms also have used such methods to minimise foreign exchange risk, he said.

An earlier yen surge to 130 to the dollar in 1987 from 250 in 1984 caused heavy losses to China because much of its foreign debt was in yen at that time.

Those losses spurred the government to set up a special group to study changes in foreign exchange rates, Mr. Tao said.

China has achieved rapid progress in improving its foreign debt management in the past decade, he said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY MARCH 14, 1995
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Contact higher ups and gain their support for a project you have in mind today. Delving into fascinating community matters is wise now too.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There could be a delay in plans you have formulated today, but this gives you the lead time to perfect details, so be patient and all will work out for the best.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't be unimpressed with one's inability to meet a promised deadline right now. Show others that you can be relied on to finish any project assigned.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Do favours for associates and gain their added cooperation today. You'll have to exercise patience in handling a civic matter and you're going to need the help of higher ups.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You may find it hard to get started on your tasks today, but persevere and you can get it all accomplished. Feel alive and alert to all which happens today.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're now able to enjoy recreations that you've had little time for in the past. You have creative ideas that need expression. You should enjoy a very fine day.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Attend to those duties that must be done early in the day for best results. Show more interest in outside activities for gaining success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Talks with associates can produce excellent results now. You are able to communicate very well with others today and are able to get your point across.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Study your money situation well today and take steps to improve it. Be sure to keep important promises you have made to other people or they will be knocking at your door.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're thinking very clearly now and you easily advance in your line of endeavour. Stop wasting precious time and get all things done which must be done.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Engage in profitable activities early in the day so you'll have time for recreation later. Be more optimistic about the future for yourself and your mate.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Contact a close old today who has had good ideas to give you in the past. Follow your intuition when dealing with others and get excellent results quickly.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper

Save water every drop counts!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



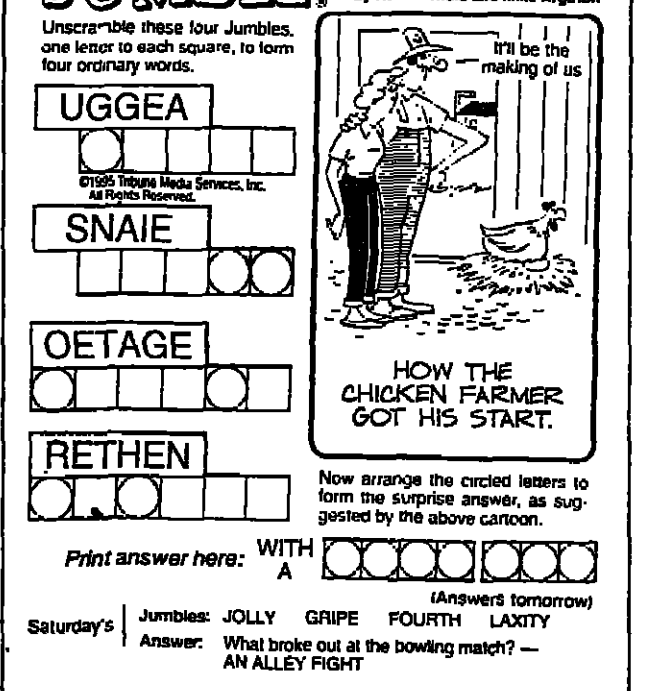
Mutt'n'Jeff



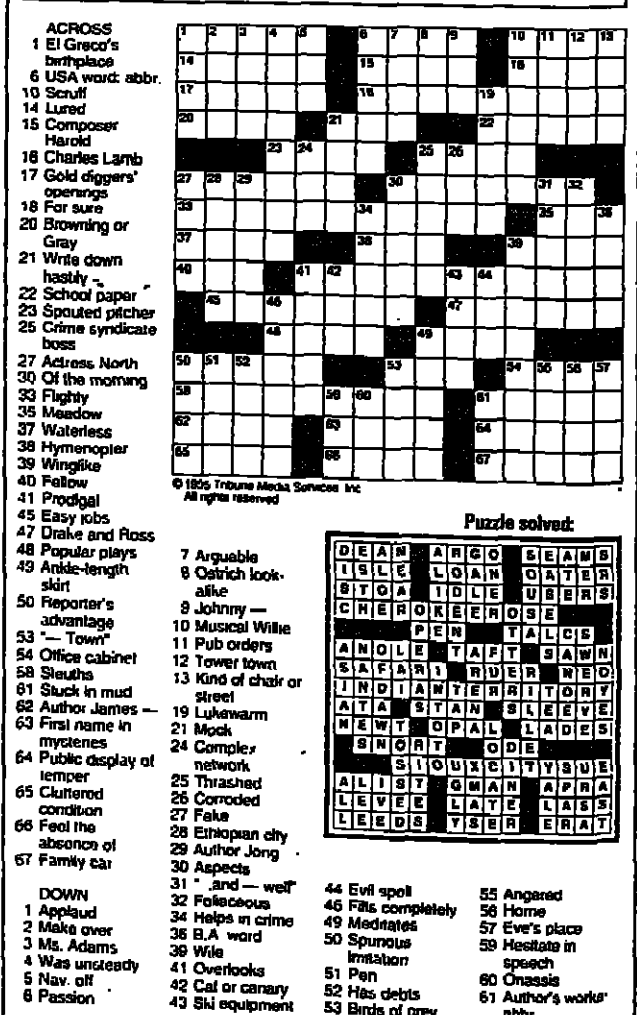
THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword



Business Daily beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Petroleum company to see light next month

★★ ENERGY AND Mineral Resources Minister Samih Darwazah hopes that the petroleum directorate at the ministry will be turned into a private company and become a reality within less than a month. On electricity charges, the minister said that although he sees no reason to raise charges, "this is a political issue in the hands of the Prime Ministry." He added: "If charges are to be raised it would be by one fil or two on industrial and commercial consumption and not on limited income groups." Mr. Darwazah referred to the "rural fil" project and pointed out that its proceeds of JD3 million were not enough to achieve the objective of providing electricity to remote areas. The cost of providing electricity to a house, in an area that groups at least 20 houses was JD1,500. Yet, when electricity is to reach a community of only 10 houses, the cost will naturally be higher, the minister said. He noted that continued borrowing from the government was inevitable.

As to Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas, Mr. Darwazah revealed that there are studies but no specific plan to establish joint energy projects with Israel. He added that Jordan is ready to help the Palestinians upon their request.

The minister concluded by stressing that Jordan's main emphasis in the future would be on widening the exploration for gas deposits, building a new refinery at a cost of \$1,000 million or expanding the present refinery at a cost of \$300 million in addition to setting up a national company to process or export other natural resources such as silica (Al Ra'i).

★★ A TECHNICAL committee has been formed to specify new locations, outside municipal limits, for stone crushers and quarries in various parts around the Kingdom. Quarries in Amman were given until the end of June to move to Wadi Al Qattar and Wadi Al Ish outside the city limits. The committee will specify new locations in other parts before the end of the year (Al Ra'i).

★★ PETRA RECEIVED 14,975 visitors in February. The number of visitors in January was 11,460. In 1994, nearly 160,000 tourists visited Petra compared to about 107,000 visitors in 1993 (Al Ra'i).

★★ AN AUSTRIAN company specialised in studying, designing and building railroads will begin at the end of this studying and designing a railway between Jordan and Syria. The first part of the railway will connect Amman with Zarqa. The Austrians will finance the major portion of the project (Al Dustour).

★★ THE ARAB Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company has received \$2 million in payment for drugs exported to Algeria. The company expects to export another shipment of drugs to Algeria this month valued at \$2.5 million (Al Aswaq).

★★ SHARES OF the National Chlorine Industries, the Cairo-Amman Bank, the Jordan Himeh Mineral and Industrial Development Bank were suspended from trading at the Amman Financial Market due to preparations being underway to increase the capital of these firms (Al Aswaq).

★★ THE NEW telephone directory for Amman will be issued at the end of this month. It will shortly be followed by a directory for the governorates (Al Dustour).

Jordan Cement begins \$87m expansion plan

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's Cement Factories Company (JCF) will invest \$87 million to meet an expected rise in exports to the West Bank and in local demand stemming from Arab-Israeli peace accords, the chairman said Sunday.

"We have begun a three-year plan to upgrade production, reduce costs, diversify products and improve our environmental standards," Basam Al Saket told Reuters.

JCF's plan will add as much as 400,000 tonnes capacity to the 3.4 million tonnes produced last year to cater for expected demand from peace-related infrastructure projects in the Jordan Valley and future exports to the West Bank.

Production from its two plants is expected to top 3.8 million tonnes by mid-1996. Swiss-based Holder-Bank is consultant on the modernisation and development plan, company officials said. It will be financed through locally arranged bank loans, officials said.

However Dr. Saket said investment was hampered by a government system that fixed prices for local cement at 44 dinars (\$63.86) a tonne.

"We hope the government frees our hand in adjusting the cost and price of cement by at least 15 dinars per tonne extra and gives us tax breaks in exports," he added.

The company's 60 million dinar (\$87 million) capital makes it one of the highest capitalised in Jordan's exchange. It has attracted foreign investor interest. It is majority state-owned but has over 55,000 shareholders.

Company officials said export prices were still far below regional levels at \$42 FOT (Free On Truck) per tonne, compared with \$92 in Israel, \$80 in Saudi Arabia and \$80 on Syria's free market.

Dr. Saket said the plan to improve production was to meet a forecast 15 per cent rise in local demand from Jordan Valley infrastructure projects in the next few years.

Local sales should reach at least 2.75 million tonnes from 2.6 million tonnes in 1995. But exports are expected to fall in 1995, after a record 19 per cent rise in 1994 to 887,023 tonnes, because of a government requirement to satisfy local needs.

A feasibility study was under way to switch one of five lines to produce 500,000 tonnes of white cement. A Syrian-Jordanian factory that produces 400,000 tonnes annually — with Syria taking 50 per cent of output — meets only 20 per cent of local needs.

Dr. Saket said JCF was positioning itself to rechannel its exports to the West Bank market to supply at least 50 per cent of a one million tonne annual projected demand. It would meet the need by expanding its factory in Rasheediyah in south Jordan.

Saudi Arabia led Jordan's export markets in 1994 with 480,720 tonnes of cement. Syria, which imported 255,000 tonnes in 1994, is a growing market and ordered 100,000 tonnes this month.

Kuwait-owned iron company launches \$20m expansion project

MANAMA (R) — A Kuwait-owned iron pellet plant, the only one of its kind in the Gulf, has launched an expansion project to boost its capacity by one-third, company officials said Monday.

The project, which will cost between \$15 million and \$20 million, will come on stream in March 1996, Is. Own, vice-chairman of the Gulf Industrial Investment Company (GIIC), told Reuters.

The German firm Krupp Polissius will provide a new grinding mill for the plant at a cost of \$3 million, he said.

The project will raise the company's production capacity to four million tonnes from three million, he added.

Company officials said the main contract to expand the \$300 million plant will be awarded next May.

Industry sources said GIIC's plant opened in 1984 but closed soon after due to lack of contracts.

The plant, built by Japan's Kobe Steel, reopened in 1989 after it was purchased by the Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC). KPC formed GIIC to operate the plant.

GIIC sells three million tonnes of iron pellet annually, mostly in India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran.

The company imports raw iron from Brazil, Sweden and India, Mr. Own said.

Financial Markets

in co-operation with
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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

| Currency | New York Close 10/3/95 | Tokyo Close 10/3/95 |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| British Pound | 1.5740 | 1.5820** |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.4125 | 1.4083 |
| Swiss Franc | 1.1797 | 1.1745** |
| French Franc | 5.0455 | 5.0265** |
| Japanese Yen | 90.90 | 90.33 |
| European Currency Unit | 1.2968 | 1.2953** |

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 13/3/1995

| Currency | 1 MTH | 3 MTH | 6 MTH | 12 MTH |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 5.87 | 6.00 | 6.12 | 6.56 |
| British Pound | 6.18 | 6.50 | 6.66 | 7.02 |
| Deutsche Mark | 4.48 | 4.75 | 4.93 | 5.25 |
| Swiss Franc | 3.31 | 3.50 | 3.68 | 4.00 |
| French Franc | 8.25 | 8.25 | 7.75 | 7.25 |
| Japanese Yen | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| European Currency Unit | 7.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 |

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 13/3/1995

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|---------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.6880 | 0.6900 |
| British Pound | 0.8828 | 0.8882 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4887 | 0.4911 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.5886 | 0.5885 |
| French Franc | 0.1367 | 0.1374 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.7614 | 0.7652 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.4356 | 0.4378 |
| Swedish Krona | 0.0000 | 0.0000 |
| Italian Lira | 0.0011 | 0.0013 |
| Belgian Franc | 0.0000 | 0.0000 |

Other Currencies
Date: 13/3/1995

| Currency | Bid | Offer |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| Bahraini Dinar | 1.8100 | 1.8220 |
| Lebanese Lira | 0.041775 | 0.045825 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.1831 | 0.1841 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 2.3900 | 2.3900 |
| Qatari Riyal | 0.1878 | 0.1891 |
| Egyptian Pound | 0.1850 | 0.2085 |
| Omani Riyal | 1.7750 | 1.7910 |
| UAE Dirham | 0.1868 | 0.1878 |
| Greek Drachma | 0.2755 | 0.3235 |
| Cypriot Pound | 1.4875 | 1.5525 |

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Monday.

| U.S. \$1.00 costs | Canadian dollar |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1.4090/00 | Deutschemarks |
| 1.4040/50 | Dutch guilders |
| 1.5748/58 | Swiss francs |
| 1.1720/30 | Belgian francs |
| 29.11/15 | French francs |
| 5.0185/35 | Italian lire |
| 1690.0/5.0 | Japanese yen |
| 90.13/23 | Swedish crowns |
| 7.2775/75 | Norwegian crowns |
| 6.2990/40 | Danish crowns |
| 5.6660/10 | |
| \$1.5816/26 | |
| One sterling | |
| One ounce of gold | \$382.60/383.10 |

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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ORGANIZED MARKET SEANE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 13/03/1995

| COMPANY'S NAME | NO. OF SHARES TRADED | VALUE TRADED JD | PREV. CLOSING PRICE | CHANGING PRICE |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| ARAB BANK PTC | 360 | 30120 | 188.250 | 188.250 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK | 18500 | 81680 | 4.410 | 4.420 |
| JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW | 1477 | 6246 | 4.230 | 4.230 |
| BANK OF JORDAN | 250 | 853 | 3.500 | 3.470 |
| HITDA EAST INVESTMENT BANK | 4700 | 7050 | 1.500 | 1.500 |
| THE HOUSING BANK | 5200 | 31304 | 6.080 | 6.020 |
| JORDAN KOWAT BANK | 7894 | 23677 | 3.000 | 3.000 |
| JORDAN GULF BANK | 2650 | 3352 | 1.300 | 1.260 |
| JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK | 11925 | 45270 | 3.820 | 3.770 |
| JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK | 244 | 939 | 4.000 | 3.880 |
| BEIT KHALIL SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING | 1400 | 4319 | 3.100 | 3.080 |
| ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT | 56000 | 6271 | 1.130 | 1.090 |
| ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN | 100 | 400 | 4.070 | 4.000 |
| PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK | 1250 | 1650 | 1.330 | 1.320 |
| BANKS SECTOR | 111751 | 299591 | INDEX NUMBER: 159.22 | CHANGE: -0.28% |
| JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE | 4550 | 11110 | 2.450 | 2.450 |
| BOLY LAND INSURANCE | 425 | 1084 | 2.550 | 2.550 |
| ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE | 2000 | 5200 | 2.600 | 2.600 |
| INSURANCE SECTOR | 6975 | 17493 | INDEX NUMBER: 156.43 | CHANGE: -0.00% |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER | 5555 | 1.580 | 1.570 | 1.570 |
| JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW | 13291 | 1.500 | 1.490 | 1.490 |
| VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION | 2363 | 6.750 | 6.750 | 6.750 |
| ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS | 9700 | 48607 | 5.000 | 5.000 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY | 5350 | 17684 | 3.300 | 3.300 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY / NEW | 1200 | 205 | 2.100 | 2.050 |
| NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES | 2095 | 7261 | 3.460 | 3.480 |
| ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION | 2095 | 7261 | 3.460 | 3.480 |
| SERVICES SECTOR | 30035 | 94966 | INDEX NUMBER: 130.37 | CHANGE: -0.37% |
| JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES | 150 | 4500 | 31.000 | 30.000 |
| ATTACHED CORP. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING | 650 | 713 | 1.150 | 1.090 |
| THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES | 14901 | 44624 | 2.980 | 2.990 |
| THE ARAB POTASH/NEW | 150 | 735 | 5.000 | 4.900 |
| JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY | 170 | 1583 | 9.380 | 9.200 |
| THE JORDAN INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL | 1100 | 4028 | 3.700 | 3.620 |
| THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS | 5133 | 38254 | 7.450 | 7.450 |
| ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING | 18650 | 77315 | 4.200 | 4.100 |
| JORDAN DAIRY | 100 | 210 | 2.050 | 2.100 |
| THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING | 3550 | 9585 | 2.700 | 2.700 |
| JORDAN PAPER & CARBOARD FACTORIES | 2774 | 11096 | 4.000 | 4.000 |
| RAFTA INDUSTRIES | 14859 | 41971 | 2.840 | 2.790 |
| DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT | 8248 | 41198 | 7.970 | 7.970 |
| ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE | 25800 | 22704 | 0.900 | 0.870 |
| ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES | 1500 | 9733 | 6.500 | 6.480 |
| LIVESTOCK & POULTRY | 84900 | 57679 | 6.690 | 6.660 |
| ARAB PAPER CONVERSION & TRADING | 3850 | 3359 | 1.300 | 1.300 |
| NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES | 900 | 3260 | 3.750 | 3.880 |
| INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 3050 | 6415 | 2.200 | 2.090 |
| JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES | 2450 | 2600 | 1.110 | 1.090 |
| UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES | 200 | 800 | 4.100 | 4.000 |
| ALADDIN INDUSTRIES | 400 | 1660 | 4.200 | 4.150 |
| JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JMCO | 4350 | 3009 | 7.000 | 6.800 |
| NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING | 350 | 1603 | 4.740 | 4.550 |
| JORDAN RUBBER-CHEMICALS | 2150 | 3436 | 1.600 | 1.580 |
| ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS | 450 | 1101 | 2.510 | 2.440 |
| UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES | 20400 | 84292 | 4.080 | 4.000 |
| INDUSTRIAL SECTOR | 218345 | 479846 | INDEX NUMBER: 120.38 | CHANGE: -0.73% |
| GRAND TOTAL | 367106 | 891895 | INDEX NUMBER: 124.17 | CHANGE: -0.33% |

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England player to appeal sentence

LONDON (AP) — Less than two hours after receiving a three-month jail sentence for assaulting a taxi driver, Chelsea and England midfielder Dennis Wise was freed on bail Monday pending an appeal.

The 28-year-old Chelsea captain, who has made eight international appearances for England, was convicted Feb. 8 for common assault and criminal damage over an incident on a London street last October.

After hearing his sentence announced in a London magistrates' court, Wise appeared shocked and on the verge of tears as he was led away. When the magistrate refused to grant bail for an appeal, Wise's lawyer rushed to Southwark Crown Court, where a judge grant unconditional bail while the player appeals both his sentence and conviction.

Handing down the jail term, magistrate Geoffrey Breen said Wise had resorted to the actions of "a bully" when he assaulted 65-year-old taxi driver Gerald Graham after Graham declined to take the player and his girlfriend where they wanted to go.

"You have been found

guilty of assaulting a 65-year-old man in quite disgraceful circumstances," Breen said. "When he made it clear that he was not going to bow to your demands, you resorted to violence."

The incident had been complicated by the assertion that, before the assault, Wise's girlfriend was clinging to a door as the cab tried to pull away.

Breen said that instead of going to the assistance of his girlfriend, Wise had "kicked out the reinforced glass partition and punched and man-handled (the driver) with a view to further violence."

Breen said the offense was "so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified."

Wise, who denied the charges, was also to pay £965.14 (\$1,544.92) compensation for damage to Graham's taxi, £169.95 (\$271.92) for damage to Graham's spectacles, £100 (\$160) for the "shock and distress" suffered by Graham and £370 (\$592) in court costs.

Had his three-month sentence taken effect immediately, Wise would have missed the rest of the domestic English season.

Chelsea managing director

Colin Hutchinson said Wise would now be free to play for the club, but was "unlikely" to take the field at Stamford Bridge for Tuesday's European Cup Winners Cup match with FC Bruges of Belgium because of a thigh injury.

Wise joined Chelsea in a £1.6 million (\$2.56 million) transfer from Wimbledon in 1990. He scored in his England debut against Turkey a year later, his only goal so far for the national team.

After his conviction last month, Wise withdrew from the England squad for the game at Ireland on Feb. 15. Wise's case is the latest in a long line of soccer woes that have beset the game since the World Cup.

In England alone, Southampton goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar has been charged with taking bribes to fix matches, Arsenal's Paul Merson has undergone treatment for cocaine addiction, Eric Cantona was banned for the season and charged with assault after kicking a taunting spectator, fans invaded a pitch at Chelsea, and Arsenal manager George Graham was fired for allegedly taking under-the-cover payments related to transfer deals.

Baggio back in match-winning style

PARIS (AFP) — Roberto Baggio celebrated his return from injury by keeping Juventus four points clear at the top of the Italian league with a match-winning performance on Sunday.

Back after a three-month injury lay-off, Baggio scored one goal and made another in the 2-0 win at home to Fiorentina.

The World Cup striker, playing only his second game since November 27, hit the target from a free-kick from a tight angle in the 64th minute to help Juventus hold on to their four-point lead at the top of the table ahead of Parma.

Fabrizio Ravanelli, who scored in the 1-0 Italian Cup semi-final first-leg win at Lazio Wednesday, was on target again, with a goal in the 56th minute. The 100th goal of his career was created by Baggio, who supplied the winning pass from deep midfield.

Baggio, who had surgery on a serious right knee injury last month, made his return in the cup game at Lazio, a side who destroyed Fiorentina 8-2 in the league only three days earlier. Baggio put Ravanelli through to score in that game too.

Parma lost no ground to the leaders, however, beating Sampdoria 3-2 with two goals from Gianfranco Zola, who also missed a penalty.

Zola scored in the 18th and the 75th minutes, bringing his total to 13 in the league this season, with Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla scoring the other in the 22nd minute.

Parma lost no ground to the leaders, however, beating Sampdoria 3-2 with two goals from Gianfranco Zola, who also missed a penalty.

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Juventus are on 52 points from 23 games with Parma on 48 in what has emerged as a two-horse championship race.

Lazio drop from third to fifth place following their 3-2 beating at Napoli after leading 2-0 at half time thanks to two goals from Pierluigi Casiraghi in the 20th and 40th minute.

Colombian striker Fredy Rincon replied with two goals for the home side (49min, 56)

However, coach Johan Cruyff, who threatened to quit in midweek in an outburst of frustration with the media and the club management, vowed the team for the Paris tie would be "different."

In Germany Werder Bremen surged back into contention for the Bundesliga title, moving to within a point of leaders Borussia Dortmund.

Trailing by four points at the winter break, Bremen

EUROPEAN SOCCER

and Renato Buso hit the decider with five minutes to go.

Marco Simone, who scored a hat-trick last week in the win over Brescia, scored the winner for AC Milan in their 1-0 defeat of Padova which moved them up to third place on 39 points. It was Simone's seventh goal in three matches.

AS Roma, fourth on 38 points, could only draw 1-1 at home to Torino who got an early goal from Ruggero Rizzitelli. Uruguay Daniel Fonseca replied in the 40th minute with a superb goal from a free-kick.

In Spain Real Madrid lost for only the third time this season, beaten 3-1 at Racing Santander, the giant-killers who thrashed Barcelona 5-0 last month.

The top three clubs all lost, with Barcelona beaten 2-0 by Atletico Madrid to add to their recent run of troubles.

Real remain four points ahead of Barcelona and five ahead of Deportivo La Coruna, who without their injured Brazilian World Cup star Bebeto were beaten 1-0 by Zaragoza, in fifth place.

Barcelona, three days ahead of the return leg of their European Cup quarter-final against Paris St. Germain, were clearly in poor shape with Bulgarian striker Hristo Stoichkov rarely involved in the action.

Freiburg meanwhile dropped to fifth place.

Mario Basler set the tone for the match as he fired Bremen ahead after just 63 seconds. Mirko Votava hit the second on 27 minutes, followed by Andreas Herzog's 40th minute penalty.

In the second half, Freiburg's Thomas Vogel scored an own goal just two minutes before the fifth goal in the 52nd minute by Basler. Uwe Spies scored a consolation goal for Freiburg five minutes later.

Dortmund, who fell to Kaiserslautern last week, were behind against Frankfurt through Poland's Jan Furok in the sixth minute, but Michael Zork equalised in the 15th minute.

Behind Dortmund and Bremen, Kaiserslautern are in third place following a 2-2 draw against Stuttgart, and Borussia Moenchengladbach fourth after a 3-0 win over Bottom club Dynamo Dresden.

Freiburg's persistence enabled Anders Limpar to get away and cut back for unmarked John Ebbrell who somehow allowed the ball to bounce away off his shins, and in the 23rd minute the big Scott's aerial dominance should have brought the opener.

Southall's long clearance was easily won by Ferguson whose flick put Stuart Barlow beyond the back line, but when Barlow opted for a first time right-footer Pavel Srnicek got the slightest touch to turn the ball onto the bar and away.

But Newcastle were still more composed and dangerous despite the bare and bumpy pitch. Southall made good blocks to keep out efforts by Ruel Fox and Clark, then Gillespie, released by Lee, flashed a shot across the face of goal.

Limpar had a shot which Srnicek watched go past then Clark failed to unduly trouble Southall after Kitson's delightful lay-off with his chest.

Southall foiled Clark again at the start of the second period and soon afterwards Newcastle were forced into a reshuffle, Robbie Elliott coming on for ankle injury victim John Beresford.

Newcastle still had better shape and balance but Everton began to look more threatening and Barlow missed another great chance on the hour.

Ablett broke up a promising Newcastle break and his instant ball sent Barlow away from Venison. The striker steadied himself and picked his spot as Srnicek advanced, but dragged his effort across goal.

But in the 66th minute Goodison erupted. Unsworth's free kick from the left found a downward Ferguson header, Marc Hottiger was deceived by the bounce and with the defence standing still Watson steamed in to get a touch with his head that crept over the line.

With Wembley slipping away from them, Newcastle's anxiety grew as they poured forward.

They seemed certain to get their reward in the 79th minute. Hottiger put in Kitson and when he pulled back, Clark seemed certain to qualify only for Southall to make the best save of the match, Fox then turning the rebound into the side netting.

Ferguson might have finished Newcastle off after a Peacock error and Barlow fired into the crowd after a Ferguson break, but it mattered little as Goodison fans celebrated their triumph.

Another NBA 1st for Shaq as Magic beat Spurs

ORLANDO (R) — Shaquille O'Neal experienced a new high in his young NBA career by coming up a winner for the first time against rival center David Robinson as the high-rolling Magic rallied to a 110-104 win Sunday over the San Antonio Spurs.

O'Neal collected 28 points and 13 rebounds to see his team beat David Robinson and the Spurs for the first time in six career meetings. Robinson had 34 points and 12 rebounds.

"Today was a great battle, you can not get much more

hyped for a game and it was a well played game," said Robinson. "Down the stretch they just made some big, big shots."

Nick Anderson scored 13 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter as the Magic charged ahead. Anfernee Hardaway had 20 of his 31 points in the second half and scored 12 in the third quarter to help Orlando pull even entering the final quarter.

Orlando, whose 48-14 mark is tops in the NBA, won its fourth straight game and improved to an NBA best

32-1 at home.

In Phoenix, Tim Hardaway's layup with 1:20 left in overtime snapped a 117-117 tie and Donyell Marshall hit three free throws in the final 23 seconds to lead the Golden State Warriors to a 124-117 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

It was the Warriors' second straight overtime win over the Suns after snapping an 18-game losing streak at Phoenix.

Charles Barkley led Phoenix with 36 points and 16 boards.

Cheltenham Cup

Williamson hopes for racing dream

CHELTEMHAM, England (R) — The Champion Hurdle last year was a nightmare for Irish jockey Norman Williamson. He lost the winning ride on Flukey Dove after being banned for careless riding.

Williamson had to watch from the stands in agonised frustration as Mark Dwyer drove the plucky mare up the gruelling Cheltenham hill to victory.

This year the wheel of fortune has turned full circle and Williamson could land every jump jockey's dream — he rides Cheltenham Gold Cup favourite Master Oats and strongly-fancied Champion Hurdle contender Alderbrook.

He has ridden almost 100 winners this season but would happily give them all up for his first victory at Cheltenham, the mecca of nation-

al hunt racing.

"Cheltenham means everything to me," said Williamson, who is praying for rain for the mud-loving Master Oats in Thursday's Gold Cup.

Almost 300 of the finest racehorses in Britain, Ireland and France are battling for a share of the one million pounds sterling (\$1.6 million) prize money at the three-day festival.

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23 MICHAEL JORDAN 1984-1993



File photo showing Michael Jordan, who is reportedly considering returning to professional basketball, raises a banner in Chicago Nov. '93, to officially retire his basketball jersey (AFP photo)

Will he or won't he? Michael Jordan isn't saying

CHICAGO (AP) — Michael's mystery has everyone on edge. What's he going to do? Play basketball or not? And when's he going to let everyone in on his plans?

The Chicago Bulls were scheduled to practice Monday and Michael Jordan was a possible participant as rumours flew that he would make his announcement and end all the speculation.

"When Michael makes his decision, why can't we just all wait for him to make it?" Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf said in a phone interview from Arizona on Sunday. "He needs to be left alone so he can think. If he wants to consult with anybody, he

can."

Bulls coach Phil Jackson said again Sunday he wasn't sure what was going to happen.

"I think he's going to weigh it out another week and probably come back and see us maybe Monday and Thursday when we have a couple of practices and then see how it goes from there," Jackson said on NBC.

Reinsdorf said early Sunday that he still hasn't discussed the basketball situation with Jordan and he had no knowledge of an announcement concerning Jordan's future.

He claimed he and Jordan last talked Thursday night when Jordan in-

formed him he was giving up baseball. Reinsdorf reiterated he didn't know which way Jordan was leaning and said he wouldn't reveal it if he did.

Meanwhile, this week's issue of Newsweek magazine reported that Reinsdorf and Jordan have been talking, and the future of disgruntled Bulls forward Scottie Pippen has been a primary topic. The Chicago Tribune had reported Saturday that Jordan wanted assurance that Pippen would remain with the team if Jordan played next season.

Newsweek quoted a team insider as saying Jordan wants more money for Pippen and himself in renegotiated contracts.

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Sameh Madani
Managing Director

Indoor Athletics Championships Privalova, Sotomayor are the record-breakers

BARCELONA (AFP) — Record-breakers Irina Privalova and Javier Sotomayor stamped their mark on the World Indoor Championships which ended in a flood of medals here on Sunday.

Peerless high jumper Sotomayor ended the three days of competition by becoming the first man to win five medals at the championships — and he almost celebrated by breaking his own world record.

The Cuban world and Olympic champion, however, finally made do with a plain 2.28m gold-winning performance, to go with his 1989 and 1993 titles.

But Privalova's feat of becoming the first athlete to take golds at three different distances — the 60m, 200m and 400m — took pride of place.

The Moscow-based former skater won in a championship record 50.23secs, seeing off defending title holder Sandie Richards of Jamaica (51.38) and Daniala Georgieva of Bulgaria (51.78) — as well as disappointing Stuttgart world champion Jearl Miles — in her first-ever individual 400m championship display.

She then said: "That's the first and last time I do that!"

"I don't know how 400m

runners can recover from that sort of hard work.

"I had hoped to break the world record but I realised before the final that it was a tough one to beat so today I just went for the win."

Privalova added: "I'll go to the World Championships at Gothenburg with the double in mind."

"If I go well in the 100m, then I'll run the 200m as well — that will be no problem. But no more for 400m races, what I really want is to win that 100m gold."

Privalova, whose 60m title came in Seville and the 200m in Toronto, had come here talking of breaking the 12-year-old world best time of 49.59 set by Czech Jarmila Kratochvilova and got within three tenths of a second in the semis.

Sotomayor did not miss a jump on his way to equalling his best of the year but then had a crack at 2.44, one centimetre higher than his own best, nudging the bar agonisingly down on his third attempt.

He was made to work for his success, however, by Greece's Tambros Papakostas (2.35) and Tony Barton of the United States (2.32), who both produced personal bests to reach the podium.

European champion Stei-

nar Hoen, who beat Sotomayor earlier in the season, came fourth.

In all, 14 medals were decided on the final day and each produced moments to remember.

For awesome power, nobody came close to 22-year-old Mozambican prodigy Maria Mutola, who took her unbeaten run over 800m to 41 races by winning in 1:57.62 after flirting with a world record herself.

She was on target until halfway but explained: "I tried to beat the world record but it is difficult alone — you need help. I will try again."

Her drive, however, was enough to gift all four of the next finishers personal best times, the minor medals going to Yelena Afanasyeva of Russia and Letitia Vriesde of Surinam.

For excitement, the men's 60m hurdles took the honours. So did winner Allen Johnson, who crowned two superb achievements this season — beating Colin Jackson to end his 44-race unbeaten run and taking the United States indoor title — with his first major international success.

He won in 7.39sec, dragging compatriot Courtney Hawkins to silver and a personal best 7.41 and Tony

Jarrett, the world silver medallist in Stuttgart, to bronze in 7.42.

The British runner, it seems, can never win. The perpetual bridesmaid behind Jackson, he looked set for success with Jackson snubbing these championships only to find a new man to lose to.

Olympic and world indoor reigning champion Marc McKoy, the former Canadian now running for Austria, came fourth.

Another American, Darrell Hall, finally clinched a major individual title as he took the 400m in 46.17 after a battle royal with Nigerian Sunday Bada.

Hall's previous successes have come in the relay, running a beat for the Olympic gold-medal winning 4x400 relay in Toronto.

Gothenburg, however, is not his main concern, Hall saying: "My main aim is the 400m in Atlanta."

For close finishes, the women's 60m hurdles took top billing, one hundredth of a second separating the medallists before a delighted Aliuska Lopez of Cuba got the verdict with 7.92 over Olga Shishigina, the Asian Games title holder, and Brigita Bukovec of Slovenia.

Jamaican Clive Terre-

longe, meanwhile, produced the back-from the dead tale of the event, winning the 800m just a day after being disqualified, then reinstated.

He ran 1min. 47.30sec, a personal best, to beat Kenyan Benson Koeck, fresh from his win at the U.S. Championship in Atlanta.

For self-improvement, Regina Jacobs of the United States could not be matched. Her gold-medal time in the women's 1,500 — 4min 12.61sec — was an incredible 14sec inside her personal best and too good for the likes of silver winner Carla Sacramento of Portugal (4:13.02) and Russian Lyubov Kremlyova (4:13.19).

The one sad note of the day came for one-jump Brian Wellman of Bermuda, despite shaving the world triple jump indoor record with a mighty 17.72 second-round effort with his only legal jump of the competition.

That earned him gold but afterwards he said a serious knee injury to long-time friend Edrick Floreal of Canada in the same competition had upset him badly.

He responded superbly, however, "I was upset, he said. But I turned a negative into a positive."

Graf captures 88th title

DELRAY BEACH (Agencies) — Top-seeded Steffi Graf took home her 88th career trophy after winning the \$430,000 Delray Beach Winter Championships Sunday with a 6-2 6-4 victory over second-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain.

Graf's victory in a constant, swirling wind tied her with Evonne Cawley for third place on the WTA Tour's list of all-time holders. Martina Navratilova leads the list with 167 titles, followed by Chris Evert with 157.

"It's amazing and I think could get a lot of them," said world number two Graf, when asked if she could name the events she's won.

"I really just win the tournaments, but never think which one is this now. Maybe when I stop playing, I'll look back like that."

Graf's 73-minute win over the fourth-ranked Martinez was her fourth consecutive triumph here and her sixth

overall title at this event, formerly known as the Virginia Slims of Florida.

Martinez, who has only beaten Graf once in their 11 career meetings, said the left hip injury she sustained during her quarter-final match Friday was not a problem against Graf. Nevertheless, the injury seemed to affect Martinez's ability to hit backhands and it was backhand errors that cost her.

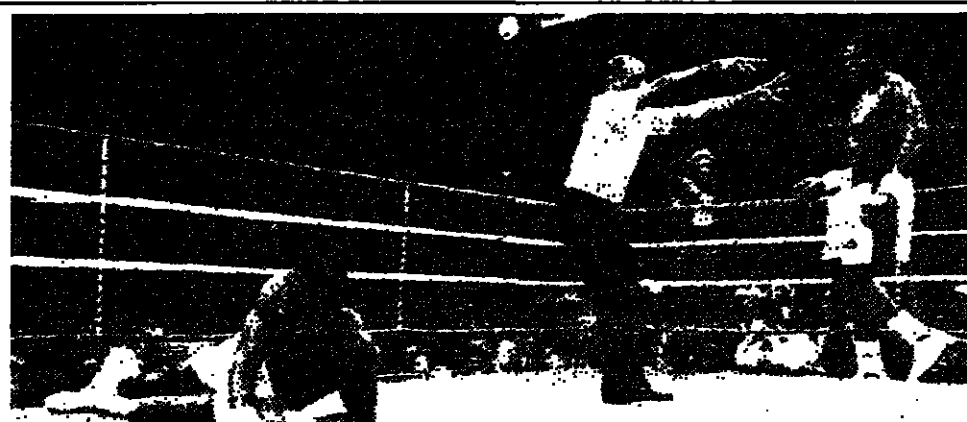
Sampras, Agassi advance

In Indian Wells, California, top-seeded Pete Sampras and No. 2 Andre Agassi, both playing at top form, won their quarterfinal matches by identical 6-3, 6-4 scores Saturday in the \$1.8 million Newsweek Championships Cup.

Sampras, who will face No. 11 Stefan Edberg in one of the semifinal matches, needed only 78 minutes to eliminate No. 8 Todd Martin during the day.

Agassi, who will meet No. 3 Boris Becker in the other semifinal, dispatched No. 7 Wayne Ferreira of South African in just 74 minutes under the lights.

Edberg and Becker both won despite losing the first set. Edberg rallied for a 2-6, 6-4, 6-1 triumph over No. 14 Thomas Muster of Austria and Becker came back to beat No. 12 Magnus Larsson of Sweden 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.



Boxer Herbie Hide of England (left) gets up from the canvas as the referee sends Riddick Bowe of the U.S. to a neutral corner. Bowe took the WBO title after six rounds (AFP)

Despite victory, Bowe's stature takes pounding

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Riddick Bowe has a title again, but a lot of fans left the MGM Grand Garden believing he is not the same fighter who won the undisputed heavyweight championship.

Although Bowe knocked down Herbie Hide seven times en route to winning the WBO title in the sixth round Saturday night, a comment often heard was that Bowe gets hit too much.

Hide outpunched Bowe, landing 41 more blows. But the 1.88-metre, 97-kilogramme Hide couldn't match the strength and power

of the 1.96-metre 109-kilogramme Bowe.

After being knocked down for the fifth time in the fight, in the fifth round, Hide came back to hurt Bowe with a seven-punch barrage to the head.

"I got a little overzealous and I had to regroup," Bowe said. "I must admit tonight was not one of my best performances."

"He wasn't quite as sharp as I like to see him," said Eddie Futch, Bowe's 83-year-old trainer. "But he was there with a very unorthodox guy."

Something Bowe's next opponent, Jorge Luis Gonzalez said, could relate to Bowe's performance.

"In this business, you've got to be bad, you've got to be mean," Gonzalez said. Bowe seems to lack focus. Perhaps the good life has

been bad for the career.

Bowe plans to visit Mike Tyson at the Indiana Youth Centre. He wants to fight Tyson after Iron Mike, serving time on a 1992 rape conviction, is released from prison March 25.

"We'll see what Mike Tyson says and how he feels and when he wants to fight," said Rock Newman, Bowe's manager. "From there we'll put together a strategy on where we'll fight."

Bowe's critics believe he better be concentrating on his fight against Gonzalez on June 17 at the MGM Grand.

It's hard to figure Gonzalez because of the sub-par opponents he's fought in building a 23-0 record with 22 knockouts. His latest victory came Saturday night, when he stopped Bryan Scott on a cut eye in the second round.

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♠A8 ♠AQ883 ♠9752 ♠42
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♣ Pass 1♥ Pass
2♠ Pass ?
What do you bid now?
- Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K8 ♠AKJ10953 ♠AQ83 ♠Void
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one diamond. What action do you take?
- Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠5 ♠A84 ♠AQ863 ♠J52
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♣ Pass 2♣ Pass
2♥ Pass ?
What action do you take?
- Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K6 ♠A6 ♠KJ8752 ♠873
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass
2♣ Pass 2♥ Pass
?
What do you bid now?
- Q.5—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
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The bidding has proceeded:
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Jordan outlines its dual approach to democratisation, development

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan has told the U.N. summit on social development held in Copenhagen that the Kingdom is following a dual approach that aims at democratisation and economic and social development.

A speech delivered by Social Development Minister Salwa Damen-Masri on behalf of His Majesty King Hussein also noted that Jordan "has always been particularly attentive to the need for international cooperation at all levels, as a way of fulfilling the sacred trust of any government to secure for its citizens a dignified life free from injustice, fear and want and at the same time, to play a constructive role as a member of the international society."

"One of the most hopeful signs of the future is the realisation, at world level, that these two objectives complement and reinforce each other," the King said.

"In Jordan, we have sought to fulfill our duty to our citizens by a dual approach that aims at democratisation, and economic and social development," the King said.

"In a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional society like ours, political pluralism, popular

participation, and accountable government are the best protection for the rights and dignity of the citizen. We have also worked diligently to build a better life for our future generations — where each may have an equal opportunity to fulfill his or her potential, regardless of ethnicity, religion, or gender. Our accomplishments in these fields stand scrutiny."

Following are major excerpts from the speech:

"The enormous resources that were devoted to armaments, in order to maintain military parity, can now be utilised to improve socio-economic conditions, to promote democratisation, and to intensify the global efforts to protect human dignity, equity, and well-being. But we must not be carried away by our optimism to disregard the challenges which globalisation entails. We must speak out against the counter current that manifests itself in national, ethnic, or sectarian strife."

"One key to social development is education and this philosophy has been reflected in our heavy investment in that field, with a full 50 per cent of our students all the way through to university level being women. A second

major entry point to social development is to ensure the inclusion of all the poor and disadvantaged sectors of society. Our society is built on the principle of solidarity. We are happy to say that, in this context, there is active collaboration between the public sector and civil society in Jordan. Our non-governmental organisations bring together men and women, volunteers and professionals. They are well organised and their contributions are a source of pride for us."

"We have made great strides in social development, but the road before us is still long and arduous. One of the major problems we face is unemployment. We have a tremendous pool of talent in Jordan, but we must find ways to secure full employment to fulfill the potential of all our men and women. We have come up with some solutions to this challenge and we look to this summit for an exchange of experience which will assist all countries South and North."

"At the same time, Jordan spared no effort to reach a comprehensive, just, and lasting peaceful settlement to the conflict that plagued our region for decades. We are

prepared to cooperate with all in the region and beyond, to promote respect for human rights, tolerance, and social and economic development. For too long, the Middle East made the news chiefly in the context of conflict and strife. In the future, we hope to be talked about in the context of stability, cooperation, and progress."

"The cause of peace faces determined resistance from all groups in all countries of the region. Where these forces gain strength, they do so partly because radicalism finds a fertile soil in discontent and hopelessness. Our fight against them is our fight against poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion. Not only in our region, but in the whole world, the ultimate triumph of peace will be the triumph of hope over despair."

"The United Nations was established in the wake of one of the fiercest conflicts in history in order to preserve world peace and defend the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As this august body approaches its 50th anniversary, let us make a solemn commitment to work together to promote social development and social justice throughout the world."



His Majesty King Hussein on Monday visits the headquarters of the Royal Jordanian Air Force (Armed Forces photo)

King visits RJ facility, air command

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday visited the engineering department of Royal Jordanian (RJ) at the Queen Alia International Airport.

King Hussein, who was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, inspected the department's sections and was

acquainted with its programmes and activities.

Issuing directives to officials at the department, King Hussein expressed admiration of the department's performance and commended efforts exerted by all of RJ's personnel.

King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Armed

Forces, also visited the Royal Air Force command where he was received by the chief of staff of the force, Prince Faisal and senior officers. After meeting with the chief of staff, King Hussein met also with senior air force officers and issued directives on issues of concern to the air force.

Alawite-police clashes kill 8 and wound 50 in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Agencies) — Eight people were killed and around 50 hurt, most of them by gunfire, in violent clashes Monday in Istanbul suburbs between Turkish police and angry Shiite Alawite protesters, the Anatolia news agency said.

The violence erupted in the Gazi district of Istanbul, home to the city's moderate Muslim Alawite community, when thousands of angry Alawites took to the streets to protest an attack in the district on Sunday, in which three people died and 15 were injured, the agency said.

It was the latest toll for the Sunday attack, in which unidentified gunmen opened automatic fire on cafes and a pastry shop in the district.

With 11 people dead and some 60 injured in clashes since the weekend, Turkish authorities earlier Monday slapped a curfew on the district and Prime Minister Tansu Ciller called an emergency cabinet meeting.

The eight killed in the clashes, which involved gunfire, petrol bombs and nightsticks, were among several thousand demonstrators who had gathered in the mainly Alawite district in Gazi Mahalleli to protest an attack in which two people were killed Sunday.

The clashes broke out

when demonstrators, making their way towards the local police station, broke through a police barricade.

Police had cordoned off the whole district and attempted to keep journalists out, reporters on the spot said.

Two people died and 15 were hurt on Sunday evening when unidentified assailants fired automatic weapons at four cafes and a pastry shop in the Gazi Mahalleli district on the European side of the Bosphorus.

The attackers, who included a woman, succeeded in escaping.

The dead included an Alawite priest and the driver of one of two taxis commandeered by the attackers to reach the scene. The driver was found fatally stabbed in the boot of his vehicle.

The attacks prompted demonstrations by several hundred Alawites in Gazi Mahalleli and other districts of Istanbul. Shops and vehicles were damaged and police had to fire into the air to disperse the crowds.

Fifty other people were injured in the overnight protests, some of them hit by gunfire, Anatolia reported.

No claim has been made for Sunday's attack on the Alawites, also known as Alevis, a community estimated at

more than 10 million people in Turkey. The Alevis, part of the Shiite strand of Islam, are disliked by fundamentalist Sunni Muslims as they favour a secular state.

Witnesses said riot police, backed by gendarmes, fired into the air from armoured vehicles to restore calm as demonstrators hurled stones at security forces.

The riots centred on two main streets in Istanbul's Gazi working class district.

Witnesses said security forces and para-military gendarmes cordoned off a police station, stoned by the rioters on Sunday night, against any fresh attacks.

A Reuters correspondent saw some protesters preparing petrol bombs in the streets where demonstrators were chanting "Down with fascism" and "we don't want Sharia (Islamic law)."

Interior Minister Nihat Metense said 96 shops, eight cars and three police vehicles had been destroyed during the riots.

"This is the handiwork of foreign groups which want to divide the Turkish people," he said on television.

Mr. Metense, who held an early morning briefing with the city's senior security officials, said it was not known which group was behind the attack that sparked the riots.

Major sets Britain, Israel on closer path

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — British Prime Minister John Major concluded his two-day tour of Israel on Monday, with glowing praise for the Jewish state after paving the way for closer economic ties.

Mr. Major, only the second serving British prime minister to visit Israel since Margaret Thatcher in 1986, underlined the "great deal of friendship" he had encountered and in return voiced strong support for the peace process.

"The ties that exist between the United Kingdom and Israel are so numerous, so personal and so widespread," he told a press conference.

"The development of economic activity and the increasing prosperity and employment that follows is the best and surest antidote to terrorism," the premier said.

He brought a delegation of nearly 30 chairman and chief executives of top British companies and urged them and their Israeli counterparts to exploit fully the new opportunities created by the peace process.

The captains of industry heeded his call and set up an Israel-Britain business-to-business council which will meet regularly to boost the \$2.2 billion of trade recorded last year.

Mr. Major said he saw "remarkable prospects for

new and improved trade and investment between the United Kingdom and Israel."

He had also agreed to take up with Britain's European partners Israel's difficulties on agreeing a new European trade deal.

The prime minister also announced several initiatives: a U.K.-Israel Arts Fund, the doubling of a joint science and technology research fund and new awards for excellence in English language.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres asked Mr. Major to help finance one of several Palestinian industrial parks planned in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Prime Minister Major was very favourable to the idea," Mr. Peres said after meeting with the British leader.

The idea behind the parks is to reduce the 50 per cent Palestinian unemployment which is seen as a key in the growing support for militancy in the West Bank and Gaza.

"We must try to handle fundamentalism... not with the sight of a gun, but with economic involvement," Mr. Peres told a gathering of the British business leaders accompanying Mr. Major.

Israel hopes each of the major countries aiding the Palestinians — among them the United States, Britain, France, Japan and Sweden — will "adopt" one of the industrial parks, Mr. Peres said.

Khomeini son brain dead after heart attack — doctor

NICOSIA (AP) — The son of the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, long considered a possible contender for high office, is brain dead after suffering a severe heart attack, state-run Tehran Radio said Monday.

Dr. Hassan Arefi, head of the 30-man medical team treating Ahmad Khomeini at the Baghyatollah hospital in north Tehran, said the 48-year-old cleric and politician was not responding to efforts to restore his brain functions.

He did not specify what the treatment entailed. But he told the radio, monitored in Nicosia, that Mr. Khomeini's brain and nervous system stopped working after the heart attack Sunday and that there is considerable internal bleeding.

Dr. Arefi said doctors were facing "immense problems" with Mr. Khomeini's circulatory and respiratory systems as well as his liver, although his heart and lungs are functioning.

"The difficulties continue," he reported.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) quoted Dr. Arefi as saying that Mr. Khomeini has been in a coma since Sunday morning and is likely to remain in that condition for "a long period of time."

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who succeeded Mr. Khomeini's father as Iran's spiritual leader in 1989, visited Mr. Khomeini Sunday and called on Iranians to pray for his recovery. Iran Televi-

sion reported. President Hashemi Rafsanjani went to the hospital Monday, his third visit since Mr. Khomeini collapsed, while a crowd of people gathered outside the building waiting for word of Mr. Khomeini's condition.

The powerful parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri, a leading hardliner, also visited the hospital Sunday along with other senior officials.

IRNA said Mr. Rafsanjani urged Dr. Arefi and his team to "consult fully" with foreign doctors if necessary despite Iran's distrust of the West. The agency said Mr. Khomeini's family had rejected sending him abroad.

But it reported that a British physician, identified only as Simon Parsons, arrived in Tehran Sunday night to join Dr. Arefi's medical team.

The agency quoted Dr. Parsons as stressing that some patients with brain damage do recover. There was no elaboration.

On Sunday, Iran's state television network showed Mr. Khomeini lying in the hospital's intensive care unit with tubes protruding from his mouth and nose.

The middle-ranking Shiite Muslim cleric, known as a hojatoleslam, has been a member of the Supreme National Security Council since his father's death from cancer in June 1989.

The council oversees Iran's defence and security policies and coordinates the operations of the various intelligence services.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Libya threatens to expel foreign workers

NICOSIA (AFP) — Libya threatened Sunday to expel 2.5 million foreign workers if the United Nations persisted with sanctions imposed on Tripoli in 1992. Libya "would find itself obliged to expel the (foreign) workers if the sanctions were maintained," Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser told the London-based Arab television station MBC monitored here. He said such a measure would become necessary "due to the decline in job opportunities," estimating at 2.5 million the number of foreign workers in Libya. He said the figure included workers from Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia. "If we decided to do without these workers it would mean exporting the problem to those countries," Mr. Muntasser said. He was speaking from Copenhagen, where he was attending the United Nations' social development summit.

Hurd back UAE case against Iran

BAHRAIN (AP) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd gave strong backing Monday to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) moves to take its dispute with Iran over three strategic Gulf islands to the World Court. The official Emirates news agency WAM quoted Mr. Hurd as affirming that London backs the UAE's intention to submit the issue of the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs "which are occupied by Iran" to the International Court of Justice in the Hague for arbitration. Britain "strongly supports this stand, which falls within the framework of the UAE wish to see a peaceful settlement to this issue," Mr. Hurd said. He arrived Monday and conferred with the UAE president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan.

Iraq reports Iranian infiltration

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Iraqi newspaper said Monday that Iranian infiltrators have been arrested after crossing the border to carry out acts of sabotage. "Elements have infiltrated (Iraq) coming from a neighbouring country that would do better to tackle the challenges and the popular anger it faces," said Babel daily run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday. The Iraqis, "who planned to spread panic in Iraq, suffered the same fate as those who had come before them," Babel added in a reference to previous arrests of Iraqis announced over the past few years. An Iraqi newspaper on Friday blasted Iran's "provocation" on the border, and called on Tehran to end its hostile attitude towards Baghdad with which it was at war from 1980 to 1988. The Iranian security services earlier announced the arrest in Tehran of "two Iraqi spies and bombers."

The Netherlands opens Jericho office

JERICHO (AFP) — The Netherlands on Monday officially opened a representation office in the self-rule enclave of Jericho on the occupied West Bank, diplomats said. The ceremony was attended by Dutch diplomats as well as Nabil Shaath, minister of international cooperation and planning, and Saeb Erakat, local government minister in the Palestinian self-rule authority. Germany and Denmark have already set up representation offices in Jericho, and other countries have said they will follow suit. Egypt, Morocco and Norway have opened representation offices in the self-rule Gaza Strip.

UAE fights infiltration, begging

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday introduced harsher penalties against beggars and illegal entrants after previous punishment failed to tackle the problem. The federal cabinet approved large fines, penalties of up to 10 years in prison and deportation of beggars, infiltrators and people involved in forging entry visas, according to the official news agency WAM. It said the new law included at least 10 years imprisonment for people who forge residence permits.

Bahrain receives record rain

BAHRAIN (AP) — Thunderstorms, rarely seen at this time of year, whipped Bahrain through the night, dumping more rain in less than 24 hours than the central Gulf island sees in a year. The Bahrain meteorological service told the Associated Press that 67.9 millimetres of rain was recorded Sunday, "the highest daily total ever measured in Bahrain since records began in 1946," in the downpour from 9 p.m. to midnight. The previous one-day record was 64 millimetres on April 7, 1961.

22 Jews arrested in row over ancient bones

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police on Monday arrested 22 ultra-orthodox Jews after a violent protest against building work on a site thought to contain an ancient Jewish cemetery. A police chief Yaakov Peled said more than 200 ultra-orthodox Jews had gathered Sunday at the site, near Tel Aviv. "Dozens of them broke into the building site and hurled stones at the police, 22 were arrested and taken to the Abu Kabir jail," he added.

Britain urges Israel to join nuclear pact

DUBAI (AFP) — Britain on Monday urged all Middle East countries to join the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as it sought to boost defence cooperation with the Gulf, one of the world's largest arms markets.

Egypt has won broad Arab support, including from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), for its refusal to sign the extension of the treaty when it comes up for renewal next month unless Israel also joins.

The Jewish state, which refuses to comment on reports it has 200 nuclear warheads, says it cannot sign while it still has hostile neighbours.

But British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told a press conference here: "I think it would be better if all states in the Middle East signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty."

He said it would "underline stability" in the region. A British official said Mr. Hurd's comments were directed at Israel.

Mr. Hurd also ruled out an end to the embargo on Iraq. He was speaking just ahead of Monday's regular two-monthly U.N. Security Council review of the oil and trade sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

"It must be right to maintain the sanctions against Iraq... not because we have a quarrel with the people of Iraq, on the contrary, we would like the hardship to come to an end as soon as possible."

"We have a quarrel with (President) Saddam Hussein... because he has not fully implemented all United Nations resolutions," Mr. Hurd said.

Afghan Shiite chief killed in captivity

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Abdul Ali Mazari, the most important leader of war-torn Afghanistan's minority Shiite community, was killed while being held captive by the Taliban religious movement Monday, sources in Pakistan and Kabul said.

A Taliban spokesman in Pakistan said Mazari died in a gun battle on a helicopter in the air, but commanders of Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani said in Kabul he was killed when the helicopter crashed.

Mazari, captured by Taliban fighters during fighting in southwest Kabul at the weekend, was being flown along with some other Hezb-e-Wahdat prisoners to Kandahar in south Afghanistan, said Taliban spokesman Mohammad Masoom Afghani.

While the helicopter was in flight, after taking off from Charsayab, 25 kilometres south of Kabul, Mazari snatched a Kalashnikov rifle from a Taliban guard, Mr. Afghani said.

Mazari killed six Taliban guards before he was himself gunned down, said Mr. Afghani, speaking by phone from the Pakistani border town of Chaman, opposite Kandahar.

In Kabul, three pro-Rabbani commanders said a crash resulted in the deaths of Mazari, his secretary and a Wahdat commander.

Stocky and short with sharp eyes, Mazari was being held at Charsayab and photos taken by Western reporters, which were available in Kabul Sunday, showed him in captivity — looking frightened with his hands and feet tied.

Mazari became leader of a united Shiite front, the Hezb-e-Wahdat, which was created

by eight Afghan Shiite groups after the Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, following their defeat at the hands of the mujahadeen.

During the decade-long Afghan war against the Soviet-backed communist government in Kabul, Mazari was one of the main figures in the crusade against the Soviet occupation.

Before the emergence of Wahdat, he had led a group called Nassr (victory), which was considered the most revolutionary of all Shiite factions and the faction most faithful to the hardline of late Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

More recently, Wahdat — which had controlled a chunk of territory in southwest Kabul, where it frequently had clashes with pro-Rabbani troops — was split into two groups.

While the Mazari-led group was bitterly against striking any compromise with Mr. Rabbani's military strongman, former defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud, the other headed by Akbari adopted a conciliatory stance.

Wahdat, under Mazari, had joined hands with Mr. Rabbani's bitter foe, former Premier Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in an alliance that also included northern Uzbek warlord, former communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

The coalition launched a military campaign to oust Mr. Rabbani in January 1994, triggering an inconclusive war in and around Kabul that left thousands dead in the capital, besides driving tens of thousands into seeking refuge elsewhere.

COLUMN

Gap between Russian deaths and births rise

MOSCOW (AFP) — The gap between deaths and births accelerated in Russia last year, causing a decline in the population of 920,000 in 1994 compared to 800,000 in 1993, the news agency Interfax said here. Quoting a Labour Ministry spokesman, he said the death rate last year was 15 people per thousand, compared with a birth rate of just nine per thousand. Russia's total population at end-1993 was 148,400,000. In that year, the country recorded a net migration gain of 500,000 people, mainly from conflict zones in other countries of the former Soviet Union. A recent U.S. study showed that the life expectancy of Russian men dropped from 63.8 years in 1990 to 58.9 in 1993.

Dentist sells baby reputedly for \$30,000

PALMI, Italy (AFP) — A high society Italian dentist trying to conceal an affair with a student, sold their illegitimate baby son to an ex-convict for a reputed sum of \$30,000, newspapers here said Sunday. Giuseppe Sciarone, a 41-year-old dentist from Gioia Tauro in Calabria, sold the baby — via a senior hospital consultant acting as a middle man — because he wanted to conceal the affair from his wife and family and refused to recognise the child, they said. His 28-year-old lover, who believed Dr. Sciarone loved her but also wanted to hide the affair from her post family, went along with the plot and agreed to stay in a hotel in the nearby town of Palmi in the final phase of her pregnancy to avoid a scandal.

The dentist, meanwhile, asked Professor Sebastiano Caracciolo, 61, head of the maternity service at a hospital in Palmi, to help him sell the child, according to the reports. Prof. Caracciolo contacted Vincenzo Cedro, a small businessman and former convict, who had never had children with his wife and agreed to buy the baby provided everything was kept secret. Mr. Cedro, according to the newspapers, took the newborn child and the same day registered him as his own son, born from an "extra-marital affair. But police, who interviewed the mother, realised Mr. Cedro could not be the father because he was serving a prison sentence when the child was conceived. The child, according to the papers, has now been returned to its mother while Dr. Sciarone, Prof. Caracciolo and Mr. Cedro have been placed under house arrest after being indicted.

Mr. Cedro, who held an early morning briefing with the city's senior security officials, said it was not known which group was behind the attack that sparked the riots.

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Boy hangs self after bad marks at school

BOURG-EN-BRESSE, France (AFP) — A 13-year-old boy hanged himself after being scolded by his parents for his bad marks at school, police in this eastern French town said. The boy was found by his 15-year-old sister Friday night hanging from a beam above his bed at his home at Chazey-sur-Ain, 50 kilometres south of here. Police said the boy, whom they did not name, might not have intended to kill himself as the laths of his bed had apparently given way under his weight. The boy might have been trying to attract attention by simulating his hanging, police said.

Alcohol blamed for drop in life expectancy among Russian men

LONDON (AFP) — Alcoholism has reached "pandemic proportions" in Russia, where it is blamed for a sharp drop in male life expectancy since 1987, according to a British medical study. The University of Wales study, published by the British Medical Association, said the average Russian today does not live long enough to collect his retirement pension thanks to alcohol. "26,200 Russians died officially of 'alcohol poisoning' compared with 11,700 five years earlier. In 1991, it said, 'more than a quarter of the labour potential in Russia was lost in connection with deaths which were caused predominantly by alcohol.'